THE LABOUR CHURCH

AND ALLIED MOVEMENTS OF THE LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURIES

A Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy Degree from the University of Edinburgh.

By

The Reverend David Fowler Summers, B.A. Hon.

"The front cover of our syllabus this year is from a design for a banner, drawn by Mr. Herbert Cole, of London. The design was presented to the Stockport Labour Church by Mrs. "Julia Dawson", of the "Clarion", and has since been re-copied, full size, on to material out of which the banner is now being made. The whole of the work is in the hands of a few women comrades, and when finished will be undoubtedly a work of art." *Stockport Labour Church Syllabus*

PREFACE

In 1951 I went to Edinburgh for one year's post graduate study; because my imagination was stimulated by casual references to the Labour Churches, I stayed for three. A few questions revealed that little was known about these manifestations of early socialism and that a thorough investigation of them would be a contribution to learning; my plans were changed and I enrolled in the degree course.

It was felt that it might not be possible to gain sufficient information about the Labour Churches to justify a full thesis, so the topic was broadened to include allied movements. However there were so many societies and associations whose aims and objectives paralleled or overlapped those of the Labour Churches that it has been necessary to restrict the 'allied movements' to those which had a definite and specific relationship to the churches founded by John Trevor. A number of the other groups are merely listed in a directory.

The basic source of information for this study has been the Labour Prophet and Labour Church Record, and the "Labour Prophet Tracts". But without the information contributed by people who were active in the movement, the present study would have been impossible. I should like to express my gratitude to those who responded to my letter in the Manchester Guardian and to my later correspondence. The significant parts of their letters and papers are quoted, and reference is made to personal interviews with them, because the insight thus given into the life of the movement cannot be better conveyed. Of my many correspondents, I should like

to pay special tribute to Mrs. H. M. Mitchell, who was instrumental in the formation of the Ashton-under-Lyne Labour Church; to Mr. A. J. Waldegrave, one-time secretary of the Labour Church Union who graciously read the section on the theology of the Labour Churches; and to Mr. A. L. Brown, who allowed me access to the unpublished papers of Fred Jowett. The help and suggestions of these three have been of particular importance.

The problem of gathering, arranging and evaluating information have been made easier by the assistance of Lawrence V. Thompson, biographer of Robert Blatchford, Bernard Palmer of the Library Association, London, and many librarians throughout Great Britain, Canada, and the United States of America. I am deeply grateful for their courtesy and help. Financial assistance has been of prime importance. Without the help of my parents, the Rev. Benson and Mrs. Summers, the generous gifts of the late Mrs. A. J. Logan of Yorkton, Sask., three months leave of absence from my responsibilities as the minister of Zion United Church, Carleton Place, and a grant from the Canada Council therwork would never have reached the present stage.

The preparation of the manuscript has had the help of a number of friends, chief among whom have been Mrs. G. R. MacKay, Mr. and Mrs. John Cutherbertson, and Mrs. E. Snedden. They have assisted with proof reading, corrections, and page numbering, etc. Special appreciation goes to my wife for her patience, her encouragement, and her typing.

To my advisors, Mr. W. H. Marwick and Professor Wm. Tindal, I pay high tribute. They have been constant in their attention and help and have had patience beyond the call of duty. They are in

no way responsible for the shortcomings of this study but they may, both of them, take credit for any of its good points. They have wisely counselled me against digressions, have corrected a number of errors and false emphases, and have directed me in the paths of scholarship. I am deeply appreciative of their efforts on my behalf.

The Labour Churches were part of a spontaneous revolt of Labour. It is interesting to note that when conditions of a similar nature appeared in Canada in 1918 to 1920, Labour Churches were formed in several centers. During the thirties, in several mining and industrial areas of the United States and Canada, similar conditions appeared again, giving rise to the work of Claude Williams in Arkansas, Fred Shorter in Seattle, Hahn in Buffalo, and Paul Cotton in Eastern Pennsylvania and the Religion aand Labour Foundation in the United States, the Fellowship of the Christian Social Order and the Religion-Labour Foundation of Canada.

In the modern world many groups have been formed to express the religious implications of industrial society, movements like the Iona Community and the Worker Priests of France. Perhaps lessons learned in the Labour Churches may be of interest and relevance to future developments in this field.

Carleton Place, Ont.
June 1958.

Work Brother mine; work, brain and hand,
To free our Labour and our Land;
That Love's Millennial morn may rise
On happy hearts and blessed eyes.
    Hurrah! Hurrah! true Workers be
    In Labour's Knightlier Chivalry

-- Gerald Massey.
(Frontpiece in
L.C. Hymn Book)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Appendix Volume

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE LABOUR CHURCH

AND ALLIED MOVEMENTS OF THE LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURIES

A Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy Degree from the University of Edinburgh.

By

The Reverend David Fowler Summers, B.A. Hon.

The Labour Church is an organised effort to develop the religious life inherent in the Labour Movement, and to give to that Movement a higher Inspiration and a sturdier Independence in the great work of personal and social regeneration that lies before it. It appeals especially to those who have abandoned the Traditional Religion of the day without having found satisfaction in abandoning Religion altogether.

The Message of the Labour Church is that without obedience to God's Laws there can be no Liberty.

The Gospel of the Labour Church is that God is in the Labour Movement, working through it for the further emancipation of man from the tyranny, both of his own half-developed nature, and of those social conditions which are opposed to his higher development.

The Call of the Labour Church is to men everywhere to become "God's fellow workers" in the Era of Reconstruction on which we have entered.

-- John Trevor in The Prophet[1]

---

1. Prophet, March 1894, page 18.

Appendix Volume

THE LABOUR CHURCH

AND ALLIED MOVEMENTS OF THE LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURIES

A Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy Degree from the University of Edinburgh.

By

The Reverend David Fowler Summers, B.A. Hon.

The Labour Church is an organised effort to develop the religious life inherent in the Labour Movement, and to give to that Movement a higher Inspiration and a sturdier Independence in the great work of personal and social regeneration that lies before it. It appeals especially to those who have abandoned the Traditional Religion of the day without having found satisfaction in abandoning Religion altogether.

The Message of the Labour Church is that without obedience to God's Laws there can be no Liberty.

The Gospel of the Labour Church is that God is in the Labour Movement, working through it for the further emancipation of man from the tyranny, both of his own half-developed nature, and of those social conditions which are opposed to his higher development.

The Call of the Labour Church is to men everywhere to become "God's fellow workers" in the Era of Reconstruction on which we have entered.

-- John Trevor in The Prophet[1]

---

1. Prophet, March 1894, page 18.

AN IDEA IS BORN

It was Sunday evening, April 26, 1891. John Trevor walked the streets of Manchester. His heart was weighed down with a brooding burden of hopelessness. Why was it that he could not so preach that his hearers would break the confining walls of institutionalism and with the mighty power of religion bring life to the 'depressed masses'? For months now he had been sending the members of his congregation home to their Sunday dinners "with severe self-questionings as to their right to have any dinner at all in a city of such hideous squalor."[1] But what was the use? They did little about it apart from giving to charities; they did not help their less fortunate brothers to obtain justice; they did not help them to live more abundantly! On the other hand, how could they come into more direct contact with working-class people? Trevor had to admit that he knew no solution to the problems he could so clearly envisage.

Religion must break the confining walls of institutionalism and become a vital force in the pressing problems of life. But how? He thought of his sermon that night:

> Can we not rise with the enthusiasm of the Salvation Army yet without its intellectual poverty and narrowness, and proclaim the presence of God in our midst? Let us here and now dedicate ourselves to the Cause of God in our world.[2]

These too were 'impatient words that led nowhere'.

Doubt began to take possession of his mind. Could it be that

---

1. Trevor, John My Quest For God, First edition, (hereinafter Quest) p. 221.
2. A reconstruction of Trevor's sermon based on notes quoted in Quest, p. 241.

the churches had no message of salvation for society? What of the Unitarian Church? Were even those who were free from the fetters of historic dogma so lacking in life that they were without power? Was it the very liberty of thought and freedom of conduct of the Unitarian position which denied it the zeal and enthusiasm so necessary to every successful religious movement? But, whatever the answer to these questions, unless he could persuade his congregation to concentrate their attention on God's work in this world, and unless he could lead his people to consecrate themselves to God's service, he would feel the four walls of his church in Manchester to be

> . . . like the four walls of a grave, and the roof like the earth above . . . with no sense of daisies and lesser celandines springing in humble loveliness from the turf.[1]

Walking the streets, and turning the problem over and over in his mind, Trevor's despair grew deeper. Presently he met Sam Lowndes, a working-man who had been attending Upper Brook Street Chapel regularly until the past few Sundays. They fell in step, side by side. Trevor later wrote of that meeting:

> I asked him what was the matter. We had a long talk, pacing up and down the hard pavements, and at last it all came out. He liked me, he liked my sermons, but he could not stand the atmosphere of the Church. He could not breathe freely. He gave examples of the kind of thing that upset him. In answer, I said, that if he could not find a home in that Church, it was no home for me; and that we must get one started to which we could go together. We shook hands, with the promise on my part that I would form such a Church, and on his that he would help me. That was the first step towards the founding of the Labour Church. . . . I lay awake some hours that night, my brain turning over and over this new idea, and fell asleep with the determination that a Workingman's Church should be formed.[2]

---

1. Quest p. 226
2. Quest p. 241

When wilt Thou save Thy People?
O God of mercy! when?
Not kings and lords, but nations!
Not thrones and crowns, but men!

Flowers of Thy heat, O God, are they,
Let them not pass, like weeds, away --
Their heritage a sunless day!
God save the People.

-- L.C. Hymn Book, No. 2[1]

---

1. Mrs. M. Senior reports that Conrad Noel borrowed her copy of the music edition in order to suggest the inclusion of this hymn in the Church of England book.

The New Concept:

That night John Trevor found the simple conception which could turn hopelessness into joy: "God is in the Labour Movement". The belief that God is working through the Labour Movement as once He had worked through the Churches was the living thought that could free religion from the confines of dogma and institutionalism, and yet inspire it with a mission and message commanding the total allegiance of its adherents. The vitalizing principle was at last revealed.

This new concept gave Trevor the impetus and confidence to step outside the narrow circle of his 'free' Church, and to throw himself wholly into the midst of the growing Labour Movement. Because he conceived the rising 'self-consciousness of Labour' to be realized in himself as 'God-consciousness', he accepted the mission of spreading that realization far and wide.

> Now I saw how and where we could become God's fellow-workers in the world, and accept our own responsible position in the unfolding of man's high destiny. Man must become the Human Providence of the world, in co-operation with God as the Divine Providence; and in these times the Labour Movement seemed to be the point at which he could best co-operate -- the growing point of the evolution of Humanity Godward.[1]

Trevor conceived the goal of evolution to be the awakening of, and the ever higher and wider sweep of consciousness from Self-consciousness, through Tribal-consciousness, National-consciousness, Class-consciousness, and Universal-consciousness to God-consciousness. Reality in life comes only as one attains God-consciousness; anything less than this is incomplete and unsat-

---

1. Quest pp. 241-2.

isfying. He claimed that the principle of the extension of consciousness has guided all the great movements of history, though generally men have been unaware of it. Thus men of the Western World have been unable to co-operate in the evolution of their own destiny. In the Orient, where men have acknowledged this principle of development, there has been a lack of growth in other aspects of life which has vitiated their philosophies and religions. We of the Modern World, though, can learn from the successes and the mistakes of our predecessors. We

> . . . must reject none of the functions of our being, but must work them all out sincerely, according to their place and purpose in us, knowing that the end of this working out lies in finding God in them all, and the reality of them all in God. So, too, we must not reject the world. We must live in it, work in it, share in its activities, always along the line of the discovery of God. Until the whole of life becomes our own, made real to us and unified by the discovery of God in every part, we have not fully realized the ~~meaning and the~~ meaning and the reality and the harmony of Self, Universe, God.[1]

Trevor's proposed venture came from the combination of two ideas: (1) The goal of evolution is God-Consciousness, and (2) The present point of evolutionary advance is the Labour Movement. From these propositions came the idea of a new church. It was to be a 'church' for it was to stimulate and express the corporate experience of a group; it was to be a church 'for labouring folk and all who could see the justice of Labour's claims' for it was intended to be an integral part of the Labour Movement.[2]

Trevor took the proposal of such a 'Workingman's Church' to a

---

1. Quest p. 243.
2. The Labour Church was to be the way in which its members could "consciously co-operate with God in the process of human evolution." - Quest p. 243.

friend, a member of the Socialist League, who was in close touch with the Labour Movement. 'Anarchist-communist-revolutionist-atheist' William Bailie[1], a man with whom Trevor intellectually disagreed, but in whom he recognized a vitality and reality of life often missing in his more agreeable and orthodox church friends, enthusiastically accepted the idea. In a description of this reception, Trevor later wrote:

> A Socialist Salvation Army! -- that is what he saw in it. Like many another revolutionist, he was almost heartbroken by the apathy and the selfishness of those for whom he was sacrificing himself, and he thought if anything were to be done to awaken among them the splendid self-sacrifice and devotion which characterizes the Salvation Army, it would have to be through some kind of religious enthusiasm.[2]

Bailie suggested that the name "Workingman's Church" was not entirely appropriate. Such a name would indicate a class segregation which he was sure Trevor did not intend. The name should suggest the foundational principle. If God is now working through the Labour Movement, would not the name "Labour Church" be more suggestive of the purpose of the new organization? Trevor agreed. It was in this manner that the organization which was to attempt to stimulate and express the higher idealism of the Labour Movement received its name.[3]

---

1. William Bailie was a streetcorner propagandist in Manchester. He spent four hours each day reading that he might know what he was talking about. He later emigrated, to America, where he played some part in Socialist Propaganda, and the founding of the Lynn Labour Church. *(Summer 1891)*
2. Trevor, John <u>The Labour Prophet</u> (hereinafter <u>Prophet</u>) Mar. 1893, p. 18.
3. For a good explanation of how the term "Labour" was understood to be 'classless', see editorial comment by Trevor in reply to the criticism of Dr. George Barrett in the latter's Presidential Address to the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1894, entitled "The Secularisation of the Church". Trevor states in

Trevor believed that, if workingmen were to have a church, it must be one of their own upbuilding. He had worked in London and Manchester with those who, in their church life, were most anxious to set aside class distinctions. He had a fair idea of what was being done and of what could not be done. He knew that any hint of patronizing rendered the effort, no matter how sincerely made, of no avail. If any existing church were to become a workingman's church, it must be by a reversal of policy which he deemed to be well nigh impossible. There was but one alternative. He must step outside the boundaries of all existing denominations and encourage the workingmen to form their own church. Other people could assist only in so far as they recognized that labouring people had a dignity and worth in no way inferior to that of others. They could help only if they set about to make the cause of Labour their own. Concerning this belief he wrote:

> I saw that the only men who could help them [workingmen] outside their own class were those who had workingmen's hearts in them, and that they must resolutely adopt, not the garb or the dwelling of the toilers, but the cause they had at heart, and adopt it as a cause independent of all others. I never saw the need of donning workingmen's clothes and living in the slums, in order to identify myself with my poorer brothers[1]. . . . One class cannot save another class. They must work out

---

part: "And it is not this [a class church] because its ideal is not a class ideal. The ideal of the Labour Movement is that all shall have the opportunity to labour, that none shall be exempt from labour, that all shall enjoy the fruits of their labour. Work and wealth shared by all -- this is the ideal that we strive for." (Prophet, Nov. 1894, p. 153.) See also Philip Wicksteed "Is the Labour Church a Class Church?" Prophet, Jan. 1892, p. 1.

1. In his autobiography Trevor tells of an experience which is seemingly inconsistent with his contention here. While travelling to Australia in 1876 he taught himself many of the skills required by a sailor, and then offered to serve before the mast in place of a sailor who had died. He assumed both

> their own salvation, until there are no longer any classes, but only the Brotherhood of Humanity. If any among the upper classes wish to see the lower classes saved from bondage, let them identify themselves with them, and make their cause their own.[1]

Trevor desired to implement his new idea without compromising Upper Brook Street Church; he also wished the new venture to carry the good will of his congregation. Nay, more than this, he wanted to give its members the way of getting outside their narrow selfishness and to present to them the means of giving themselves completely to the service of God. To this end he wrote a letter to his congregation[2] in which he expressed his feelings of limitation within the organized church, and his growing conviction that the real missionary work of true religion was in the Labour Movement. Undoubtedly Labour was in need of Religion for its inspiration; and it was abundantly clear that the organized churches were not arousing a sense of need for religion in the hearts of workingmen, nor satisfying the need where occasionally it did exist. The churches did not stand for true brotherhood; they did not demand the emancipation of Labour; they could give no reasonable hope for the establishment of the Brotherhood of all Humanity. There was need for a body which stood for all of these things, and which would endeavour to pro-

---

the work and the living conditions of a ship hand. "My friends could quite understand my desire to work with the sailors, but that I should be willing to abandon saloon fare for 'salt-junk' and 'hard-tack' utterly passed their comprehension. Indeed, one man frankly asserted that I must be mad. But how shallow men's minds must be when they cannot understand the infinite difference between sharing the sailors' whole round of life and merely working with them and going into the saloon for meals. It is such elemental stupidity which makes the world so hard to save." (Quest, p. 71.)

1. Prophet March 1893, p. 18.
2. This letter is reproduced in the appendix, pp. 498ff.

vide a means of expression for the Religion of the Labour Movement. Trevor proposed to deal with the matter more fully on the first Sunday morning in July, and to enter into discussion with any interested persons on the following Thursday evening.

The week night meeting accepted the proposal. Considerable sympathy was forthcoming; though a little marked opposition was expressed, the discussions were friendly and straight-foreward. The resolution to form a Labour Church was framed. The first stage in the progression from idea to actuality was successfully passed.

The new idea was immediately given wider publicity in an article in the Inquirer for July 11, 1891, entitled "The Proposed Labour Church". The following extracts from this were selected by Trevor as giving the essential positive propositions minus the unavoidable criticisms of the Unitarian position which appeared in the original. The editing was done because Trevor disliked criticizing, and did so only when driven to it.

> The history of God in the world is the history of self-sacrifice. If we would prophesy what God will do in the coming century, let us study well the lives of the martyrs of today. Wherever men are ready to die for a cause, God has a message for us. There are two causes in our times for which men are willing to toil in poverty and obscurity, to wander through foreign lands far from home, and to die, if need be, to witness to the truth of their message and mission. One is that of Personal Salvation, with God and Heaven beyond; the other is that of Social Salvation, often with no God and no Heaven beyond. The most tragic, and yet, rightly understood, the most hopeful sign of our times, is the appalling fact that there are thousands of men living a dying life today, who might be comfortable and happy if they could accept the world's Gospel; and those unsupported by any hope of future blessedness, inspired only by pain at "man's inhumanity to man". Why are these men dying? What message have we for them? Can we not tell these heroic outcasts of a God who is working out the world's salvation through their suffering, just as, ages back, he was working it out through the sufferings of Jesus?

The time is ripe for a new religious movement which shall unite together the forces of the two enthusiasms of our time -- the enthusiasm for personal salvation and the enthusiasm for social salvation -- into one conquering religious energy which shall forward the world's development as much as Christianity has done. Different minds must contribute to this great work. The contribution to it that I propose to make is the formation of a Labour Church here in Manchester. It is on behalf of Labour that the enthusiasm for social salvation is aroused. It is in the Labour Movement in all its varied forms that this enthusiasm is manifesting itself to the world. The fundamental principle of the new social order will be the universal obligation to Labour. This great principle is being advocated by a Labour Party, a Labour Press, by Labour Representatives, and a Labour Army. I believe God is at work in all these, and that the time has come when we can best express this fact and deepen the world's conviction of it by organising a Labour Church to give a new inspiration to the movement. Religion must find a place in the Labour Programme. The Labour Party must be made conscious of the fact that God is not opposed to their high aspirations, as so many churches are teaching to-day, but that the great work of emancipation to which they have consecrated their lives is God's very own. Our times are singularly like the times in which Jesus lived, and in this respect, among others, that in furthering the coming of God's kingdom on earth we must work outside the existing organisation of Churches.

The theological foundation of this new organisation I propose to express by the motto "God is our King!". The Fatherhood of God has been so much talked about and so little acted upon that it has become difficult to give the thought any adequate vitality. Moreover, the work to be done, and the people to be appealed to, are such that the idea of a Supreme Ruler, whose laws all must obey, and whose subjects we all equally are, will have more force, and gain a wider acceptance. On the social side the Emancipation of Labour will be our aim, as it is the aim of the whole Labour Party. The first work of the Labour Church will be to organise Sunday afternoon services, to be held in some public hall in Manchester. According to the growth of the Church, various practical agencies will be added. It will thus be seen that what I propose is not merely to hold popular services, but to achieve the far more difficult task of organising the workers and their friends into a religious body which will labour earnestly for the coming of God's Kingdom.[1]

In the months that followed the publication of this letter Trevor gave himself to the planning of the new venture. The help and sympathy of friends were enlisted; a promotion fund of forty

---

1. Prophet, March 1893, p. 19.

pounds subscribed, thousands of handbills printed and distributed, Three workmen friends from Upper Brook Street, chief among them Sam Lowndes[1], spent their leisure time in assisting the project. The first few Sunday afternoon services were planned, hymn sheets printed, a choir organized, and a band engaged. Finally, on October the fourth, 1891, over four hundred people gathered in the Chorlton Town Hall for the first service of the Labour Church[2].

The promise of an April evening some five months earlier was at last fulfilled. The Church organized to inspire and express

---

1. Sam Lowndes, whose experiences led to the first conception of the Labour Church, was a strong supporter of both Trevor and the new congregation. He loaned his piano (which his son reports was never returned) for the services, and named one of his many sons after Trevor.
2. The Manchester City News gave full reports of this and following services. The following reconstruction of the Order of service is based mainly upon its reports.
   1. Overture played by a string band.
   2. Brief prayer by John Trevor.
   3. Solo - "The Song That Reached My Heart" sung by Joseph Freeman.
   4. Poem - "On The Capture Of Certain Fugitive Slaves Near Washington" read by John Trevor. (This poem by Russell Lowell was one of the selections given in "Labour Church Readings", and is quoted in the appendix, pp.62ff.)
   5. Scripture Lesson - Isaiah 5 - read by the Rev. Harold Rylett of Hyde.
   6. Choir selection - "England Arise".
   7. Lecture - "Program of the Labour Church" by John Trevor. In this statement of purpose, Trevor emphasized the non-exclusive nature of the project, pledging his co-operation with the cause of Labour, the Labour Electoral Association, the Ancoats Brotherhood, etc. The Parliamentary movement has grown from the days of the Trafalgar Square Riots. What is now wanted is votes, for the Labour parties are pledged to using constitutional methods so long as they are free to use them. If this freedom is denied they are ready to use force. The Labour Church wishes to contribute to the progress that will render resort to violence completely unnecessary (applause) by bringing religion into the struggle. Trevor assured the people that he was aware of the anti-labour attitude of the churches. The way to get religion to help, and to change the churches, was to start a religious movement outside the churches. Such a movement would help people to live the godly

THE LABOUR CHURCH
MANCHESTER

GOD IS OUR KING!
"We must either obey God or serve Man." -Mazzini
GOD AND LIBERTY!

The Next Service
WILL BE HELD IN THE
PEOPLE'S CONCERT HALL
LOWER MOSLEY ST.,
On SUNDAY November 1st, 1891,
AT THREE O'CLOCK

ADDRESS BY
BEN TILLETT
ON THE
Ethics of Government

SOLOS CHOIR BAND

SUNDAY, November 8th, JOHN TREVOR will Speak on "Labour Candidates"

"Manchester Guardian" Printing Works, Blackfriars Street

FOR GOD AND LIBERTY

Friends:

From my first conception of the Labour Church Movement, I felt certain that it would be a success; but I was not prepared for the quick and enthusiastic response which has followed my appeal to the religious instincts of the people. I know that those who said that working men did not care for Religion, only half understood the case, that what they did not care for was a Religion which left Social Injustice supreme, or only sought to remove it by inadequate methods. But I supposed that any attempt to develop into an active force the Religion which lives at the heart of the Labour Movement would be met at first with so much mistrust, that the early steps toward organisation would be slow and difficult. And now, after but three Sunday Services, the real difficulty is our overwhelming success. I am not a man of leisure. Before commencing the Labour Church Organisation I was already heavily burdened, but I could not rest in the work I was doing without seeking the means of coming into closer contact with the real hearts of the people. Already contact has been made; we are in sympathetic touch; a body of aroused man and women is waiting to be organised.

But some patience must be asked of you. A deal of time and work are needed to get ourselves organised into a living body, with a living heart and head. Here is the trouble. I have so little time. But I am looking about for a good man to employ as secretary who will help me in this matter. This will add to our expense, but the cause is worth it, and the money will come. Last Sunday you put that beyond doubt. I thank you heartily for the cry you raised when I announced a collection at a future date: "Let's have it now!" Such a spirit is a guarantee that we may go foreward with confidence.

Because of this additional expense we will cut down costs in other directions as far as possible. I have already stopped the yellow posters. If you will make good use of the ten thousand handbills printed this week we shall not need any further show. And if those of you who can play any suitable musical instrument will volunteer your services, we will soon have a voluntary band, which will save some of our present outlay. Also, we want more women's voices to strengthen our choir. Many a woman helps the long day through by singing over her toil, who could also make our services brighter by singing with others on our platform. We want a strong choir and band to keep us in good heart for the work that lies before us. Come and give us your help in the cause of God and Liberty.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN TREVOR.

Reverse side of handbill advertising Nov. 1st, 1891.

the Religion of the Labour Movement was a reality. In it all labouring people should find a warm welcome and a comfortable church home. In it all those, whether labourers or executives, who had become 'Labour conscious' should find a place to work, for here was a church which took as its program of action the 'Emancipation of Labour'.

---

lives each wanted. Ours is not a 'wolf age', but it might be called a 'pig age'. We struggle to put our feet in the trough and to keep others out. Wealth makes us all guilded pigs in a golden trough. This can be changed only by God's laws. The place of the Labour Church would be to bring a simple religion without creeds by which men could learn God's laws.

8. Collection (Not taken till October 18th.)
9. Closing Hymn.
10. Benediction.

The lecture subjects and the speakers at the next three services were: Robert Blatchford - "Sunshine and Shadow"; John Trevor - "God in the Labour Movement"; and Ben Tillett - "The Ethics of Government".

Who is a brave man, who?
Who is a brave man, who?
He who dares defend the right
When right is miscalled wrong;
He who shrinks not from the fight
When weak contend with strong;
Who, fearing God, fears none beside,
And dares do right, whate'er betide;
This man has courage true
This man has courage true.

Who is a free man, who?
Who is a free man, who?
He who finds his chief delight
In keeping God's commands;
He who loves whate'er is right,
And hath to sin no bonds;
From every law but one set free
The perfect law of liberty;
This man hath freedom true
This man hath freedom true.

Who is a noble man?
Who is a noble man?
He who scorns all words or deeds
That are not just and true!
He whose heart for suffering bleeds,
Is quick to feel and do;
Whose noble soul will ne'er descend
To treacherous act towards foe or friend;
This is a noble man
This is a noble man.

-- L.C. Hymn Book, 2nd ed., No. 15

CHAPTER I

THE MAN WHO HAD THE IDEA.

The Labour Church, in its early stages, was the product of two main factors: the man whose idea gave it birth, and the movement within which it found its life. We shall discuss each of these before we turn our attention to the church itself, for apart from this background the events are inexplicable.

Initially the Labour Church was the creation of one man. Though it quickly assumed an independence which led to its development in other directions, its form was moulded to a great degree by its founder who has been described by one who knew him well[1] as a poet and a prophet. Poet he was in temperament if not in the product of his pen (though his writings are often more than mere prose[2]); and prophet he was in speaking to the imperative needs of his day if not in recalling men to a more orthodox doctrine (though his faith demanded a return to Christian moral standards). In these respects the Labour Church followed him, for, in the growing Labour movement, its inspiration was that of poet and its role was that of prophet.

John Trevor, Biographical Sketch:

The founder of the Labour Church, John Trevor, was born in Liverpool on October the seventh, 1855. His father was a struggling linen draper whose business failed shortly after John's

---

1. Rev. Philip Henry Wicksteed. See Herford, C. H., P. H. Wicksteed, p.
2. A Labour Church sympathizer in New York sent a bound double volume of The Labour Prophet (issues for 1892 and 1893) to Count Leo Tolstoy. Tolstoy's acknowledgement and reply is complimentary to Trevor's work. See Prophet, Nov. 1894, p. 146.

birth, necessitating a temporary separation of the family. Though it was reunited a few months later, it was broken permanently three years later when John's father died, and his mother became an invalid, living for another five years in pain and suffering. John and his sister were looked after by their aunt and grandparents. Further emotional turmoil was created in John's mind when he was six, for his sister went to live with the other grandparents. When his mother died, John felt utterly and completely alone[1].

Though an orphan, John Trevor was well cared for. His uncle[2], a prosperous business man in Norwich, provided generously for his upkeep; his maiden aunt and his maternal grandmother[3] were conscientious guardians of his physical, moral, and spiritual health. Though denied the security of a normal family circle, he nevertheless had the advantages of a respectable middle-class upbringing. This did much to offset the effects of the illness, arising from the many traumatic experiences of his childhood, which prevented him from taking a fully active part in the later development of the Labour Church.

Much of John's subjective self-examination, which was part of his illness, was influenced by recollections of his parents, though he remembered but little of either. Of his father he remembered only a man smoking a long clay pipe; but an incident of which he was told did make a deep impression. As a child he had been very sickly and weak, and had spent long periods hovering between

---

1. "A father's or a mother's love was therefore unknown to me, and the kind relatives who had charge of me could not supply the want."
2. Trevor of the Norwich Furniture Business
3. Miss Cripps and Mrs. Cripps of Wisbech

life and death. On one of these occasions his father had prayed that the boy's life be spared. He had added the provision, however, that he would rather the early death of the child than its long life unsaved by the Grace of God. When John was old enough to have the need of redemption impressed upon him -- which age was within the tender years of childhood -- he was comforted by the thought that his father's prayer had been answered, that he had not been allowed to live only to be lost in hell.

John's mother had practically nothing to do with his care and training from the time he was four years old, but there was one important lesson he learned from her. In her illness she had great pain and suffering which she endured with strength and patience beyond the ordinary. John knew that this came from her faith, within which pain had its place as part of the divine economy of a loving God. Thus from his earliest years he felt that suffering was not a meaningless mystery, and much less a horrible curse. It was, rather, a discipline for this life and a preparation for the life to come.

John's aunt, who was chiefly responsible for his upbringing, was perhaps the most important person in his childhood, for hers was the place of a loving mother for her sister's child. She was a God-fearing woman who watched over her ward with firmness and yet with understanding. Though she was strict, she did allow many of the freedoms so necessary for a growing boy. It was she who gave him the love and security which helped to make him the person he was. In one aspect however, her influence, in support of her mother, was to the detriment of the boy.

Religious Training:

John's grandmother was a very devout woman who took pains to train him in the knowledge and nurture of the Baptist sect to which the Trevors belonged. She made known to him the mysteries of righteousness and sin, of life and death, of redemption and damnation, of predestination and free grace, and of the crowning act of God's love in His appearing in human form on earth and in His suffering on the cross. What she did not realize was that she succeeded in impressing upon the sensitive lad one feeling above all others, and that was the fear of hell. A quotation from Trevor's autobiography will give some idea of the extent and depth of that fear:

> How to escape Hell! -- that was the one absorbing problem of my early years. I remember once persuading myself that, if I could keep one of the commandments unbroken, I might escape; the one I felt pretty sure of obeying being "Thou shalt do no murder". Unfortunately for my peace of mind, I sought confirmation of my opinion, but was assured that, not only would keeping one commandment be insufficient to save me, but that breaking one was equal to breaking them all. To enforce this statement James ii;10 was quoted. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all." The law was regarded as a chain, one link of which being broken, the whole would fall to the ground.
>
> Thus, while I was still so young, the dark cloud of Hell began to overshadow my whole life. It was not because it was presented to me very dramatically in my religious teaching, though it was always there -- real, awful, unending, and only to be avoided through faith in the blood of Christ. There must have been something in my own mind which could not allow so frightful a reality to remain in the background, but which insisted upon dragging it out into the fullest light. If Hell was there, I must know all about it, cost me what mental torture it would. So I eagerly filled up from the Bible itself what was left untold of my possible fate: -- the worm that dieth not, the fire that is not quenched, the smoke of their torment ascending for ever and ever. I feel appalled even now as I recall the sensations which these pictures produced.[1]

---

1. Quest p. 5. Cf. "I remember waking in my little crib with Satan's giant wings hovering over me."

John's religious training, begun very early by his parents, and continued by his grandmother and his aunt, was strongly reinforced by the social group within which the family moved. It was an exclusive group of narrow Baptists[1] who had a very strong sense of brotherhood among the 'saved'. Social equality of rich and poor, and mutual responsibility for one another was the pattern within the denomination; the sense of democracy and brotherhood was marred only by its exclusiveness.[2]

John remained within this Baptist sect until his early twenties, though alternation of periods of exhilaration and depression gave him times of extreme anxiety with regard to his faith. It is important here to trace in some detail (even at the risk of being repetitious) his religious experience, for it throws considerable light on much of his later activity.

The Baptist denomination to which the Trevors belonged believed that there could be no intermediary between man and God, that there could be no 'means of Grace' save the immediate action of the Holy Spirit in the human heart. Ceremonies and forms were discarded, with the exception of Baptism and Communion which were regarded as human acts of confession and gratitude, and not as effective in-

---

1. "In Norwich was a small Baptist Chapel belonging to the same group as the one at Wisbech. There were others at Liverpool, Towcester, Newark, and Lymm. The one at Wisbech was the largest and is still in flourishing condition. Only the members of this little handful of churches held the true faith, and only they were sure of salvation." - Quest, p. 36.
2. Trevor, even as a child, felt that the sense of brotherhood was good and that exclusiveness was wrong. "As a boy I refused to raise my hat to 'ladies' because I was not supposed to raise it to 'women', and would shake hands with the gardener in the presence of his master."

struments by which man could reconcile himself with God. They accepted the Bible as their sole guide to the spiritual life. This 'directness' of religious experience[1] was something that Trevor never forgot. Indeed, when he discarded doctrinal beliefs it was this directness of the divine-human encounter which became his faith[2]. It was a logical step to discard not only forms and ceremonies but also traditions and written records.

As a child Trevor was religiously inclined. His knowledge of the Bible enabled him to boast before his playmates, and to parade his superiority. But this was often a cover for his insecurity. The question which bothered him greatly was the central one of his church, i.e., salvation. He knew that salvation came from belief in Christ, but he could find no help in distinguishing his 'belief' from the 'saving belief' which he was expected to have. At one period of his life this problem became so acute that he carried his New Testament at all times, and even in the face of the derision of his classmates, read it at every opportunity, and spent hours in earnest prayer. But his depression only became deeper, and he considered himself to be one of the 'vessels of wrath fitted for destruction'. One afternoon, in utter despair, and symbolizing his acceptance of his dreadful doom, he cast his

---

1. ". . . these people seem to me to have penetrated to bottom facts more deeply than most. At any rate there was none of the weakness either of Liberalism or of Ceremonialism among them; no attempt to explain away or to dress up the naked realities of their faith." Quest p. 9.
2. "No man's religion can be described in terms other than God and Walt Whitman, God and Mazzini, God and Jesus, God and Paul. Until this uniqueness of relationship is understood, Religion will always be the enemy of progress, and suck the life out of every progressive movement. Quest pp. 247-8.

New Testament into the river.

But John did not long continue to accept his hopelessness. Reaction set in, and for a time he seemed to reach the goal of his prayers. He wrote an evangelistic sermon, vividly picturing the sufferings of Jesus on the Cross, and appealing to his fellow pupils to seek salvation through the Blood of Christ. For a time he was the hero of the school. Many, including the school bully, professed conversion. In due time collapse came, and 'disciples' returned to the more natural pursuits of boys. The period of elation over, John descended into a despair more desperate than before.

When John was sixteen, apprenticed to an architect, and living alone in lodgings, he again became absorbed in thoughts of his sinfulness and his need of salvation. He spent all of his leisure time in Bible reading, earnest prayer, and self-examination. One evening, as he was reading Paul's Epistle to the Romans he read the verse: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." His eyes were opened and he saw salvation as God's free gift which he had but to accept. The very acceptance involved much more, he knew, but the basic and ultimately the only important act was to accept God's mercy and atonement. Intellectual assent was scarcely enough; an act of will, an exercise of faith and trust, was an essential part of 'saving faith'[1].

---

1. "Religious faith is not merely an intellectual belief; it is rather an act of will which carries conviction with it, . . . The heroic Will, instinctively pressing foreward to new ventures in life, breaks up new material and gains new experiences, which the Intellect, hobbling after, accepts, arranges, and catalogues." - Quest, p. 32.

With confidence in his conversion experience, Trevor entered wholeheartedly into the life and work of the Baptist Chapel in Norwich. When his brethren were convinced of the sincerity and reality of his new found faith, he was baptized, given responsibility for a Sunday School class, and invited to join in the evangelistic and revivalist activities of the church. He gave his time and energy without stint. He not only taught his class on Sundays, but visited the scholars in their homes during the week. He spent unnumbered hours in preparing his lessons and his talks that what he did might be done to the very best of his ability. In this life of self-giving he gained valuable experience, and a self-understanding he could have found in no other way. The fear of Hell, which had been a veritable obsession with him, disappeared; in its place came a desire for a continuing experience of ever closer communion with God.

But, in the pattern now familiar to him, the peace and contentment could not remain. Low thoughts and temptations and horrors of imagination came to break the communion which he had known. Tensions of nervous strain mounted, and life itself seemed near the breaking point. Medical examination could find nothing wrong with him, so a change of environment and activity was prescribed, and he spent ten pleasant days sailing on the Rhine. On two other occasions in the succeeding three years the same pattern repeated itself; 'holidays' were spent with relatives in Liverpool and time was spent in quiet secluded study of good books.

When these periods of depression would pass, Trevor would return to his apprenticeship at Norwich, but would spend most of his time pondering his life. Why was it that the free gift of sal-

vation could not enable him to live a pure and holy life? The answer came in the suggestion that just as justification is a free gift, so sanctification will be given to the believer who puts his trust in God. He determined to try this life of consecration and commitment. After prayerful preparation he mounted the 'tight rope' of the 'Pauline-Christian life' and found he could walk. He found a joy and confidence in life hitherto unknown, which he, with one exception, was never to lose. The one exception was the time he contemplated suicide; but this story more properly belongs later in this biographical sketch.

School Days:

John Trevor's school life began in a Dame school where he was kept in continual fear of being consigned to a dark cellar. At seven years of age his second school experience was even worse. He was sent to a residential school run by a cruel and heartless woman who did not understand him. Here he lived in a constant state of fear of his teachers, his school fellows, and most of all of Hell. He became nervous, unsociable, and extremely lonely. Two years later he was sent to a middle-class school for boys run by an elderly man belonging to the same Baptist group as the Trevors. At last John received kindness, and learned to respect the Schoolmaster and those ideals for which the school stood. His academic progress was fair, enabling him to pass the Cambridge local examinations with honours in French.

During his school years John enjoyed most of the activities of boys. True, the schools he attended did not approve the frivolity of team games, but the Master of the last was a good hiker and

swimmer. In both of these activities John learned to excell. His hobbies of boat building and bonfire lighting were not frowned on too harshly; and though a number of books, among them Don Quixote, were forbidden, a wide selection of novels both classical and modern were available. During vacations he travelled a good deal, and had opportunities to enjoy farm life with its riding on horseback, feeding chickens, and sliding down hay stacks. In most respects it was a normal school life.

One aspect of residential school, however, created problems that lasted with him through life. The older boys often used to discuss their assignations with girls in the town. Also, about this time, one of these older boys woke him from sleep by making sexual advances toward him. These experiences stimulated him and awakened strong and powerful urges within him; he began to indulge his imagination. Sex became an obsession with him.

> " . . . I shrank in horror from the ugliness and hatefulness of that which I was tempted to do. But outward conformity to the laws of society still left me prey to thoughts and desires which periodically obtained complete mastery over me."[1]

Trevor's conscience pained him deeply. Long and earnest prayer to be delivered from temptation was ineffective; he brooded over his problem, and suffered mental torture.

> " . . . In an agony of desire to have my mind freed from the obsession of my thoughts, so attractive to my lower nature, so repulsive to my higher, I would throw myself on my knees and pray and pray until I had stupified myself by praying, and had thus further weakened my power for resistance. I might as well have been thrown into deep water, and told that by prayer I could save myself from being drowned.
>
> So my religious training led me to exaggerate the sinfulness

---

1. Quest p. 36

> of the thoughts that haunted me, and limited me to the one sole safeguard against them which proved completely useless."[1]

In all his later periods of depression it may be assumed that erotic imaginings and deep feelings of guilt were an important aspect of his inability to work. The significant thing is that he managed to solve his problems, and to gain insights which were able to deepen his understanding of life and to help those round about him. The following passage appears in his autobiography:

> . . . in a truly normal sex relationship, both soul and body will commune in perfect freedom; but this will only be possible where the body is the vehicle of the spirit. I am also sure that, where this full freedom does exist on both sides of our nature, there love may be the means of making us aware of the presence of the Eternal Spirit as the uniting medium which makes such perfect communion possible. In the passion with which such communion is sought and the joy with which it is found, Nature is not merely luring us on to the perpetuation of the race, deceiving us meanwhile with emotions, the vanity of which it were the highest wisdom to understand. No! Through this human communion, carried confidently and magnanimously to its natural ends, we have the opportunity of rising to the highest consciousness of real Being, of finding ourselves in the very presence of God.[2]

In the spring of 1870, at the age of 14, John Trevor finished school. Before a decision was made as to his future training, he was given a holiday on the Isle of Man, a holiday which proved to be an introduction to a host of new experiences. In only a few days he moved from the restricted sphere of a residential school to the unbounded world of nature and international concerns. It was his first opportunity to see, from a mountain top, land and sea stretch to the dim and distant horizon; it was his first visit to the very haunts of myth and legend; and it was his first vivid awareness of an outside world of foreign powers and tumultuous

---

1. Quest p. 38.
2. Quest p. 48.

warfare[1]. Childish dreams gave way to adult attitudes.

On the first evening of his arrival, John walked alone on the shores of Douglas Bay.

> The moon shone with wonderous brilliance on that calm summer night, and was reflected with strange beauty in the pools, and from the breakers, and from the crests of the tumbling waves.[2]

John felt a call to something noble and good, but yet felt lonely and depressed.

> Instinctively I yearned for a love and repose which life could not give. All the beauties of the island seemed to exasperate rather than soothe me, and to make me realise half-consciously that in all this world of loveliness and grandeur I had no home.[3]

But even more than this, he felt that his religion shut him out from this newly discovered world of nature and beauty, for it was the antithesis of the coveted world of Grace.

It is significant that it was to this same bay that John returned a few mornings later, bringing one of the boats he had made and of which he was justly proud. He trimmed its sails to the breeze, adjusted its rudder, launched it from the shore, and watched it dance over the waves. When it disappeared from sight, he said goodbye to his childhood.

After the holiday, when John refused to enter business, and when his Aunt refused to allow him to follow his interest in building and engineering because this would require the wearing of workmen's clothes[4], it was decided that he should be apprenticed to an architect in Norwich. As an apprentice he did passably well,

---

1. The Franco-Prussian War was declared on July 15, 1870.
2. Quest p. 27.
3. Quest p. 27.
4. This is possibly a clue to Trevor's interest in "Labour".

and in due time was ready to launch into the adult world of business.

Life and Love:

A few months before the end of his apprenticeship, Trevor fell in love with a woman, a few years his senior, with whom he had found friendship as together they had studied poetry and literature. He had not told her of his love, but had steeped himself in the pleasure of just contemplating it. He became most conscious of this new emotion when he left Norwich at the end of his training:

> I set out for Liverpool, like some mediaeval knight, in quest of a fuller life, with the love of God and my Lady completely filling my heart. My love was truly a worship, springing from my ideal of what love and fellowship of man and woman should be. I did not ask that it should be returned. Circumstances made me think it impossible that it should be returned, much less be consumated in marriage. It was a pure giving out of myself, asking for nothing in return but continued friendship and freedom of intercourse between us.[1]

Under the influence of this one-sided love, and of the authors they had studied together (Browning, Carlyle, Robertson, George Macdonald, and especially Ruskin), Trevor found a humanizing element softening the severity of his beliefs. He gained an ideal of a good and beautiful life to which he dedicated himself, promising God that no physical or mental suffering would stand in the way of his serving it, and that he would make it available to others. He realized that he would have to find a fullness and richness of his own life, that his ideal must become actual, before he could proclaim it to others. Naturally and contentedly he returned to Norwich and to Architecture, seeking the realization of his ideal.

---

1. Quest p. 47.

But back in Norwich there came a return of his deep depression. He craved love and affection which his unexpressed love could no longer satisfy.

Driven almost mad by the unsatisfied need to feel that he was loved, he bought poison with the intention of ending his life. In one last desperate effort to maintain his sanity and to fulfil his life, he brought the poison to his loved one and, saying nothing, laid it on her lap. She, understanding him deeply, accepted it and told him of her growing love for him. She suggested, for his health and for the easing of his mental and emotional strain, that he should take an extended sea voyage, possibly to Australia. John's generous uncle and guardian came to the rescue and provided the necessary financial aid.

<u>Trevor's Quest</u>:

On board ship Trevor set himself the task of rereading the Bible without helps of any kind save prayer and the working of the Holy Spirit. In the Epistle to the Romans, which had brought conversion to him, a sudden terrible thought came to him. It is perhaps best told in his own words: Paul's

> . . . Letter to the Roman Church I now read in prayer and faith, with perfect abandonment to God. It was a sentence in this letter which first brought light to my darkened life -- "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." I read on slowly and prayerfully, past that, past the magnificent eighth chapter, which now again, as so often before, thrilled me with its intensity of thought and life, and then on into all that maze of involved and subtle reasoning about the rejection of the Jews and the salvation of the Gentiles, in the midst of which, suddenly -- as a lightning flash -- the thought shot hot through me -- "This man is trying to prove true that which is fundamentally false." I see now that Paul made the mistake of all dogmatic interpreters -- he did not know where reverently and humbly to stop short. He must interpret everything, account for everything, present

> his scheme as one into which everything could be made fit.[1]

Trevor suddenly found himself in chaos, for disillusionment was as complete as it was swift. His collapse of faith was his realization that the scheme of personal salvation, as he conceived it, was not big enough to accomplish the salvation of the world. He therefore discarded his Christian creed, and using his religious experience as a standard, sought to "find God with a closed Bible". The search became his life task, which he thought of in terms of an empirical revolution in religion similar to the empirical revolution that had come to science centuries past. It was as part of this quest that he later established the Labour Church.

While aboard ship Trevor found an awakening and a deepening of his religious life, though this was in a vague and expansive way. It lacked a central factor which would give orientation and significance to his experiences of the vastness of the sea, the wonder of the heavens, the power of the storm, and the warmth of sailor fellowship[2]. Throughout his stay in Australia the same process went on. He deliberately widened his experiences, exposing himself to any proposition or program which had evidence of the sincerity of its sponsor. He read books proscribed by his former religious denomination; he attended the theatre for the first time in his life; he opened his mind to all influences except those obviously degrading. He set himself the task of eliminating the self-righteous snobbery which had so beset his life and which he associated so intimately with Christianity. In opening his mind

---

1. Quest pp. 62f.
2. For two weeks Trevor served as a sailor before the mast.

to ideas held in abhorence by the religious teaching of his childhood he found his consciousness of God's presence in human life growing more intense. The conviction grew that his mission in this world was to enable the growth of this conviction in his fellowmen.

Walking in spiritual 'twilight' and seeking the illuminating source, Trevor tried clerking in a business firm as a means of livelihood, but was too restless. He wrote for a local newspaper, but found that his forthright opinions were too honest for publication. Still relying on financial help from his uncle, he left the Colonies, and sailed for the United States of America where he was to investigate the possibilities of studying in a Unitarian College. He understood that his lack of Christian conviction would be no bar to his studying for, and even practicing, the Unitarian ministry. In a year of study at Meadville, Pennsylvania[1] he widened his education, studying philosophy and theology, and gained a very modern view of biblical criticism which reinforced his rejection of the Bible as literal word for word revelation.

Return to Home:

At the end of the year, due to a family situation and to the

---

1. At Meadville Unitarian College the Principal was Dr. Livermore. Prof. Cary, an Idealist following Sir William Hamilton, was professor of philosophy. While at Meadville Trevor came under the influence of Waldo Emerson and Felix Adler. From Emerson he found a faith -- not of a theological sort -- but a faith in the soundness of life from which arises self-confidence, true courage, and true Religion. From Adler he learned something of the Ethical Societies. He later acknowledged his indebtedness to Adler's writings, but speaks of no specific influence. At the time he met Adler, Trevor was assisting a fellow student in the establishment of a religious society along the lines of Francis Ellingwood Abott's "Liberal League".

disillusionment of his fiancée when she too discarded the narrow literalism of their childhood faith, Trevor returned to London, England, where he continued his studies in Manchester New College, (an institution that later moved to Oxford as Manchester College). At college and in many Unitarian pulpits throughout the land, he found a generous freedom and a ready welcome. One of the poorer churches of London invited him to be their pastor, giving him the freedom to exchange pulpits whenever the sacraments were to be observed. Feeling that such a course would be dishonest, and never being happy with compromise, he declined. Instead, he entered the profession of architecture, where he made a good living. Within a few months he moved to Dover where he built a good practice, soon opening a branch office in Folkstone. But architecture failed to give expression to his religious life and his sense of mission.[1]

On July 28, 1881, Trevor and his fiancée of some years standing were married in a registry office in London. It was a happy marriage; Trevor found an ease and repose and peace which he claims made him a little too content, and which wasted away his reforming zeal. Such was his satisfaction with married life that when he was left alone, even for short periods, he found himself in depression, and unable to work. And yet he saw these periods as times of advance.

> I believe that it has been during these periods of loneliness since marriage that all my foreward movements have had their birth. An overwhelming discontent has seized me. All existing

---

1. "As an architect I learned to loathe the competition for a livelihood which was forced upon me."

> facts have seemed almost contemptible. Old ideals and new ideals have rushed upon me as in a kind of nightmare. All the past has seemed meaningless, all the future has seemed hopeless, save so far as I have then determined that these ideals must and should be realised.[1]

During one of these periods of depression which gave rise to his determination to realize his ideals he sold his prospering architect's practice and bought a roomy house in Ballingdon, Sussex. He turned to writing, producing little of commercial value, but increasing his facility with his pen. It was a period of subjective probing and of contemplation which helped his personal and spiritual growth. The miracle of growing plants, the infinity of the starry sky, and the wonder of the birth and growth of his children deepened his consciousness of God in his life. He was also becoming more deeply aware of the needs of community life and the political movements purporting to give the solution to these problems. He took up an active part in them by organizing a Liberal Association, and an agricultural labourers union, but the election of 1885 disillusioned him, and he again turned his attention to religion and serious reading. An investigation of socialism took up much of his time during the following year. He heard Mrs. Besant, Edward Aveling, William Morris, Prince Kropotkin, and several others. At an international celebration of the Paris Commune, in March 1887, he met 'a strange sort of man' who knew little of individual socialists, though he understood the theory of socialism thoroughly. Trevor was impressed, though not yet convinced by the new ideas.

In 1887 Trevor again registered in Manchester New College, and the following year graduated. He became assistant to the Rev. P.

---

1. Quest p. 166.

H. Wicksteed at Little Portland Street Chapel, where he took charge of the practical side of the church life, with emphasis on visitation and organization.[1] During this time a very intimate and deep friendship grew up between Wicksteed and Trevor, part of the basis for which was their common social concern. For the remainder of Trevor's life Wicksteed was his constant friend, helper, and adviser. This is his testimony:

> I cannot say how deeply indebted I am to this man who, since first we met, has remained my constant friend and helper. I have as many causes to feel grateful to him -- perhaps this the chief -- that, from the first, he understood what I meant by the Labour Church. Long before any one else understood, the knowledge of his sympathy with my work cheered and sustained me through many a dark hour. Indeed, I have often said that he knew more of the meaning of my work than I myself did, and with the new insight I have gained of late into the real nature of what I have been doing, I can see that I spoke truly.[2]
>
> In Philip Wicksteed I found for the first time a man whom I could love. I dare not trust myself to say more about him, but cannot say less, so much of him lies in me, and in the work I am now doing.[3]

Manchester Ministry:

In 1890 Trevor accepted a call to Upper Brook Street Chapel, a Unitarian congregation of 93 members, 58 of whom voted for him, 10 opposed him, and the remainder did not vote. The terms of the call stated a stipend of £260 per year, moving expenses to be paid by the congregation, four Sundays holiday, and six months notice on either side to terminate the arrangements. The Sunday School

---

1. Trevor learned much about organization from Dr. Stanton Coit who was then in London organizing Neighbourhood Guilds. "From Dr. Coit I learned those principles of Club management which make of it a really vital force in Social Development." - Prophet July 1895, p. 106. Trevor recommended Coit's book on Neighbourhood Guilds as a handbook for those churches who would organize a complete social program.
2. Quest p. 219.
3.

had a membership of 170 with an average attendance of 120. The congregation had been an upper middle class one. Their Chapel had been designed by Sir John Barrie, the architect who designed the House of Commons in London. The district, however, was changing; when Trevor came in 1890 there was a substantial proportion of working-class folk in the congregation and its auxiliary activities. Trevor's ministry showed a strong sympathy for the outcast, a desire to know how to reach the masses, and a distinctly socialist bias, as is shown by an examination of his sermon topics for the eighteen months he was there.

When the Trevors arrived in Manchester there were four boys in the family, the youngest of which was ill and slowly dying. When death came in the spring of 1891 it was a release, for the child had suffered greatly. Trevor threw himself into his work.

There were problems in Upper Brook Street because the wealthy supporters were moving away from the area, and the problems of the poor working-class residents who were moving in were pressing upon the congregation. Financial support was declining though the average weekly attendance was improving for the people of the district were beginning to attend the services. The annual report shows a loss of 16 subscribers with only 7 new ones added; but at the same time a definite increase in every area of work. Trevor's predecessor had made the congregation aware of these problems; Trevor made them conscious that their efforts at charity were failing to come to grips with the deep underlying causes. But he did not have any solution; he aroused discontent but could offer no clear cut practical program.

Trevor gathered a group of young men around him, including Hugh V. Herford and Alfred Dugdale, to investigate the conditions of working people, and to study the various proposals of assisting them, and to understand the numerous schemes for reforming society that these problems might be eliminated. It was this group that provided the information and the enthusiasm which later formed the nucleus of the Labour Church. They soon realized that working people had neither the leisure nor the money to avail themselves of the broader culture so easily accessible to the middle classes. They began to doubt the value or even the right of inviting working men to attend the church; they saw that only concentration on trade union and socialist organizations could bring improvement. Here lay the workers' duty Sunday as well as Monday. The problem thus posed exercised Trevor's thinking:

> And the more I thought of it, the more hopeless did it appear to find a programme for the aroused worker in association with my church. It seemed to me that, in inviting him to come, I should be inviting him to desert his flag and neglect the true work of his life.[1]

With thoughts like this in mind, and seeking an answer, Trevor attended the National Triennial Conference of Unitarian, Free Christian, Presbyterian and other non-subscribing Churches. He expected little of the conference itself, but he did want to see what was being done in London. He took time out to visit two Salvation Army shelters, and was disquieted in mind because these Salvationists with poor theology and false economics were undoubtedly doing good. Could it be that God could work better through a lie than through the truth? He answered his own question:

1.

Ben Tillett

> What works in the world of men is not so much the possession of intellectual Truth as Being Real; though of course, only when Seeing Real and Being Real go hand in hand can man get full power for his work. But Seeing Real as well as Being Real makes it certain that you will be misunderstood. The man who only Is Real makes the Revivalist, and succeeds. The man who also Sees Real, is the Revolutionist, and fails. The former is, at bottom, a Conservative, in spite of his new methods which shock conservative nerves. Intellectually false, these Salvationists are none the less spiritually true; and so far they are a creative power, and so far only.[1]

Trevor was looking for the secret of 'Being Real' as well as 'Seeing Real'. From the source least promising came the greatest help in his quest. The Triennial Conference was addressed on "The Church And Social Questions" by Ben Tillett and Philip Wicksteed, both of whom practically prophesied the Labour Church. Yet Trevor came away still seeking a gospel.

Back in Manchester Trevor preached on the insights of the Conference, giving prominence to his own search for 'the one thing needful to make of any church or group a living movement'. It was that evening, feeling the grip of stimulating ideas and acknowledging the lack of the one key idea, that he spoke to Sam Lounds, and the idea of the Labour Church came.

Labour Church Days:

For some few months the work of the Labour Church absorbed most of Trevor's time and effort. By the end of 1891 he realized that he could no longer maintain loyalty to both Upper Brook Street Chapel and the new Labour Church. He turned in his resignation.[2] A reading of the Upper Brook Street Minute Book, and the testimony of Mr. Marsden (who had been a member of the boy's choir during Trevor's ministry) indicate that there was no opposition to Trevor

---

1. Quest p. 237.
2. His request that six month's notice be waived was granted. See Trevor's letter of resignation, Appendix p. 503f.

personally, but that there was opposition to the Labour Church particularly from a number of the more wealthy members. Trevor's relations with his former congregation remained on the best of terms. Under his successor its financial position improved; the financial deficit was eliminated; the number of subscribers was increased. Middle class patronage was to an extent restored.

As the Labour Church grew, and new congregations were being formed, Trevor gave more and more of himself. He was on the road day and night, living for the most part on nervous energy. At the end of the first year his physical energy began to play out. Something of the old depression began to return; headaches prevented him from reading and writing; work for sustained periods became impossible; still he pressed on. Finally physical collapse forced him, under medical advice, into temporary retirement. He was under doctor's care throughout the Autumn of 1892, and over the New Year spent six weeks convalescing in the Welsh Mountains. He returned to Manchester full of determination to take up again the arduous task of building up the Labour Churches, but within a few months realized that such a life was not possible for him. He retired to Rulow, near Macclesfield, where he spent a great deal of time in study and writing, with frequent visits to a number of the Labour congregations. For periods, sometimes of considerable duration, however, he was unable to do any constructive work. On these occasions he spent his time walking in the hills contemplating the beauties of nature and absorbing their tonic effect.

In regard to his depression Trevor spoke of a 'thorn in the flesh' which he never explicitly defined. He compared it to the experience which forced him, in 1880, to give up his hopes of

serving through a Unitarian pulpit, and made him return to architecture. Though the form of the experience was different, its significance was the same. As to the form of the second experience he is very explicit in his statement that it did not come from the Labour Church Movement, but that it made his public service to the Labour Churches quite impossible.[1]

> It was in the nature of things that what happened should happen. . . . I came to see that, however sorely I might be stung, and however badly my work might seem to suffer, I could not really be disabled, while I remained true to myself and my mission. . .
>
> These two experiences -- the earlier and the later -- the nature of which I may not discover, both came at first as a profound shock to my whole moral nature. I was staggered by them, and for some time inwardly injured. Yet I can now accept both as having been of inestimable worth in the upbuilding of my life; though I still sigh a deep sigh of regret that things should happen so. I recognize that what gave them their power was something inherent in the very nature of things. But when some elemental force cuts right across our inmost purposes and our inmost life, and thwarts our natural development, and compels us to courses foreign to our character, then we find ourselves face to face with a fact, the meaning of which, I think, we shall never exhaust in this life. I believe, however, that it is such facts as these that give us hints of the true nature of evil; and suggests that it is but a temporary form for temporary ends, which one day we shall be able to acquiesce in.[2]

With this experience on his mind, and trying to understand the significance of it, Trevor spent much time in the open, in close contact with nature:

> Through it all the consciousness of the eternal oneness of things sank deep into my heart -- myself a living and loving part of the of the whole, whose life and love the beauties of nature helped to grow. . . . here I found the Infinite Presence nearer than

---

1. In a letter written to the Rev. L. B. Short, dated Jan. 29, 1929, Trevor makes reference to these two experiences, thus underlining their importance: "Two experiences have from the material or worldly point of view muddled up my whole life pretty badly. One result is that I am now an old age pensioner, and therefore, I suppose, a pauper. From the point of view of the realities of life these experiences have been truly creative."
2. Quest pp. 254f.

> ever before. In the old country days, Nature suggested God. Here God himself came unmistakably into my own self-conscious life. . . . there were seasons when my own individual life grew intense; and then, when I simply lived most intensely, the surprise of God's presence came.[1]

In a very moving passage Trevor describes one of these experiences. (It is this passage to which William James refers in his Varieties Of Religious Experience.) Though the incident described is not the richest which Trevor hand, it is the only one of which he made contemporary notes. It occurred at Rulow in the early summer of 1894.

> One brilliant Sunday morning, my wife and boys went to the Unitarian Chapel in Macclesfield. I felt it impossible to accompany them -- as though to leave the sunshine on the hills, and go down there to the chapel, would be for the time an act of spiritual suicide. And I felt such need for new inspiration and expansion in my life. So, very reluctantly and sadly, I left my wife and boys to go down into the town, while I went further up into the hills with my stick and my dog. In the loveliness of the morning, and the beauty of the hills and valleys, I soon lost my sense of sadness and regret. For nearly an hour I walked along the road to the "Cat and Fiddle", and then returned. On the way back, suddenly, without warning, I felt that I was in Heaven -- an inward state of peace and joy and assurance indescribably intense, accompanied with a sense of being bathed in a warm glow of light, as though this external condition had brought about the internal effect -- a feeling of having passed beyond the body, though the scene around me stood out more clearly, and as if nearer to me than before, by reason of the illumination in the midst of which I seemed to be placed. This deep emotion lasted, though with decreasing strength, until I reached home, and for some time after, only gradually passing away.

> My past life then appeared before me as something done with, something finished off, something about which I need be anxious no more. I saw the necessity of it all, the rightness of it all, as a whole. I felt that the foundations of my life were completed; the building well commenced, the walls breast high, the scaffold poles now needed -- that the outline of the picture was drawn, and all the broad washes laid in, and the light and the shadows fixed; that now I might take up my favourite brush, and work fearlessly among the brightest colours, confident that, though not right yet, it would come out right.

And although I did not, at this time, experience that intense

---

1. Quest pp. 255f.

> consciousness of God being all about me, which, with similar suddenness and illumination, I had experienced the year before, yet I felt how very near and familiar God was, and how utterly safe my relations with him were -- so perfectly so, that there seemed to be a kind of humour in the situation, as though two friends, who had had a misunderstanding and had felt themselves estranged, should suddenly see how foolishly unreal their feelings were, and burst out into a great laugh. So I felt as if able to laugh aloud in the face of God, to think I should ever have had any fear of our not being always on good terms, always friends. Indeed, I believe I never felt so exceedingly light-hearted and buoyant and full of inward laughter as at this time, or so perfectly sure of God and of myself.[1]

Family Affairs:

During the early summer of 1894 Trevor's youngest living son, his pride and joy then six years old, became ill and was very suddenly taken from this life. It was a tremendous blow, which for a time took from Trevor any joy or satisfaction in life. (Whether this happened before of after the experience noted above is not indicated.) He began to realize, as never before, how short and temporary is human life. He began to think a great deal about eternity, and about the significance of this life in relation to the life beyond. But he claims that he did not fall into the 'snare of other-worldliness' for he recognized that though this life is but a stage it has a reality of its own which we must learn to accept.

Trevor's wife never did get over the shock of this death. Though she regained something of her old self-control and strong management of life, and was preparing to move back to Manchester where her husband would be able to resume a more active life, her health broke. Specialists were unable to do anything for her; after a fortnight's severe illness she died. Her love for her

---

1. Quest p. 268.

husband was true to her very last words: "I shall always live with you!" to which he made answer: "Yes! You will!" It was then December 1894.

On the 20th of March, 1895, Trevor married Annie Jones Higham, who had nursed his first wife through her illness.[1] Though this was quite unexpected by the people of Manchester Labour Church and his friends of Upper Brook Street Chapel who had gathered a purse to enable him to take a brief holiday, Trevor wrote little in explanation. There is an Editorial in the Labour Prophet, and one brief sentence in his autobiography. After writing of the meaning of his first marriage, its great satisfactions and its contributions to his personal development, Trevor continued:

> I have again a love and a home, which make the contemplation of the old love and the old home bearable and fruitful, and still creative within me.[2]

Shortly after his second marriage Trevor moved to London to investigate the possibilities of establishing the Labour Church in the Metropolis, and to promote the Labour Brotherhood as an organ of leadership for the Labour Church movement. For a year or more he was active in public life, paying extended visits to the Labour congregations and to towns where work might be undertaken. For only a month during this time did he 'retire': shortly after his marriage he lived in Dieppe, France, studying Socialism on the Continent. But his time of activity was followed by the inevitable

---

1. Mrs. Sarah Dickenson told the present writer that "The second Mrs. Trevor was younger than he; -- they were married soon after the first Mrs. Trevor died. The first Mrs. Trevor struck me as a woman above me, above middle class. We had not much in common. The second Mrs. Trevor was younger, and a bit frivolous. He seemed to change too. He sort of became frivolous too."
2. Quest p. 265. See also Prophet, Jan. 1895, p. 8.

collapse, necessitating another extended period of retirement, this time to the hills of Sussex. For the autumn of 1896 and the greater part of 1897 he was unable to take any part in active work; his only constructive accomplishment being his writing. By consistent effort whenever his headaches would let up a little, he wrote of his life, his feelings, and his religious development. The result, carefully edited, was his autobiography, My Quest For God.

The significance of Trevor's autobiography was far greater than that of historic record; his subjective writing had a therapeutic effect which enabled him to overcome to a large extent the neurotic problems which so beset his life. He was set free to pursue a more normal life. His periods of depression lost much of their paralyzing power. Though these periods never totally disappeared, as his friend and co-worker, A. J. Waldegrave testify, they never again had the same power to prevent his participation in the normal activities of life; but they did continue to hamper his public appearances.

After another brief interval in London, Trevor moved to Horsted Keynes, Sussex, where he turned to chicken farming as a means of livelihood. Just what was the source of his income from January, 1892 to the end of 1897 is not known. It is possible that he paid himself a salary as editor of The Labour Prophet but there is no documentary evidence to verify this supposition. The Labour Prophet Fund which met the deficit of the publication of the paper did not record the operational expenses, so a study of its accounts leave us none the wiser. It is possible, however, that the mounting deficit meant that indirectly Trevor's income was coming from the contributors to the Labour Prophet Fund.[1] Whatever were the facts

1. See A.J. Waldegrave's comments, Appendix p. 682.

he felt that he must earn his living in some other way, but his main interest was the development of what he called 'personal religion'. His efforts in this direction were formalized in his "Summer School of Natural Religion" which he formed in 1899 (and which is discussed later in this Thesis under the educational work of the Labour Churches).

Later Life[1]:

Life at Horsted Keynes was quiet. The 'Summer School' continued for two or three years, till Trevor again retired from all active connection with the Labour Church Movement. In 1902 his health improved, and he felt that again he must participate more directly in the Labour Movement; with London as his center, and with the service of the dispossessed as his program, much of importance might be done in helping the working classes find emancipation. He moved his family (there were two daughters by the second marriage) to a three roomed flat in Clerkenwell, from which he operated the Labour Church Settlement. But, like most of his projects, it was abandoned before its promise showed forth in results. Little if any record of this settlement work has survived.

In 1909 the Trevors moved to Hampstead where John took up photography. With the business assistance of his wife, he was

---

L From this point on, the life of John Trevor is less and less relevant to the development of the Labour Churches. The reader may thus turn directly to Chapter II. For the remainder of this biographical sketch full records of Trevor's activities have been difficult to find. There are gaps where further knowledge would be most interesting, but which would require time and research not relevant to the Labour Church Movement and its significance. It is trusted that the information which has come to hand will serve to give a general picture of Trevor's later life and his religious development.

quite successful, photographing such personages as Masefield, Tagore, Gilbert Cannen, Muirhead Bone, and Mrs. Bellock Lowndes.[1] During this period Trevor was interested in the Ethical Societies, often speaking at the South Place Society meetings;[2] but he deliberately dropped his active association with the Labour Churches because his new interests might reflect upon them.

> For some years I have had no practical connexion with the Labour Church. This has been due to no change of ideas on my part, but to the fact that I became increasingly convinced that some day I should be compelled to deal seriously with the Sex question. When that day came I wished the Labour Church to have no share in the odium I should incur in so doing. The Labour Church has a great work to do, and I believe it would be fatal to its usefulness were I to attempt to express on its platforms the ideas expressed in this paper.[3]

His new interest was the 'Redemption of Love from the curse of Tradition', a development that Socialism as such could not accomplish:

> Socialism will never conquer Individualism. It must make ample provision for it, or go to pieces. For this reason, among others, I think that Collective Individualism is a truer term than Socialism as an expression of our ultimate aims.[4]

In an occasional paper, The One Life, of which only the first issue has come to the attention of the author, Trevor outlined his proposals:

> For years I have had a recurring commanding impulse to write of human love naturally and to draw the human figure naturally, and in writing and drawing to present the Flesh and the Spirit as One, with no repression of the Flesh.[5]

---

1. Marie Trevor, John's youngest daughter, believes it may be possible that King of High Street, Hampstead, may have the negatives.
2. This information given by Marie Trevor cannot be verified by the Annual Reports and Lists of Speakers as published by the Society. Trevor's name does not occur as speaker, member, leader, or as a contributor to the society.
3. The One Life p. 14.
4. The One Life p. 21.
5. The One Life p. 15.

> While my childhood was lived in hell by reason of the Traditional Religion I was taught, my youth was lived in hell by reason of the sexual repression imposed on me in the name of this same Religion.[1]
>
> The right of Youth the Self-expression through Love is the great principle over which the coming fight must be raged between Tradition and Life. The Redemption of Love from the curse of Tradition in the name of Natural Religion is the work to which I must devote the rest of my life.[2]

Trevor suggested the formation of an association or a society within which conventions could be discarded in favour of a true and natural approach to life. Such a society or "Oasis" could not be established immediately because of the dangers of patronage of the wrong sort of people for the wrong motives, so a start was to be made through a correspondence club through which information could be given and the beginnings of fellowship be established.

> My conception of the Oasis as a School of Self-expression is that we shall set ourselves to help others to do the thing that they will to do, and to be the thing they will to be, by helping to form their Will by giving them Facts and Fellowship. We shall get further thus in the Evolution of God than by telling them what is their Duty.[3]

To aid in the 'Emancipation of Sex' Trevor put his artistic talents to work, doing water colours of the human nude in order to express the fundamental unity of Flesh and Spirit. His idea was to sell these to a select clientele, and thus to earn a living as well as to help forward his ideals.

> I had found it impossible to live by expressing myself in writing; perhaps I might do so by expressing myself in drawing, and selling the drawings and reproductions of them.
>
> But to me the Flesh is the word of God, full of Divine significance. To attempt to clothe it for decency's sake is to

---

1. The One Life p. 17.
2. The One Life p. 20.
3. The One Life p. 29.

> stifle the Divine Voice. Drapery as a symbol or decoration I can accept; as a veil of indecency it is abominable.[1]

Whether Trevor's "Oasis", a private group within which men and women could live the Good Life naturally and without repression, came to anything is not known. All that is known is that there was a shadow, such as the "Oasis" could have cast, over his reputation. Mrs. Mary E. Brooks tells of entertaining John Trevor for Christmas dinner in 1925 or 1926. A relative by marriage, a woman doctor, " . . . was utterly disgusted. Why, we never found out and didn't inquire."[2]

Mrs. Trevor died in 1919, leaving John very lonely. He missed her business ability and soon gave up photography. In 1922 he again tried the Unitarian ministry, serving a congregation in Newbury, Birks., but after a year he retired, and returned to London. Part of the time he lived alone, and part of the time he lived with his youngest daughter, Marie. A year before he died he wrote to the Rev. L. B. Short:

> Most of my life I have lived on the edge of financial disaster, and I know of no kind of suffering harder to bear than that of anxiety as to the means of supporting oneself and one's family. On a few occasions I have been actually without money, but have always got saved at the last moment by some unexpected happening. I find it difficult not to believe in Providence. I have never gone short in regard to the necessities of life, and occasionally have had something over. Now that I am no longer able to earn any money, my children and a few good friends are making up my income within the limits allowed under the Old Age Pensions Act -- 35s. a week in all. I am living alone in one room in very happy conditions.[3]

The financial help during the last years of his life was the

---

1. The One Life p. 32. See also: "And again there is this horrible question of money -- a veritable hair shirt to me, keeping me in constant irritation." -- The One Life p. 35.
2. See Appendix p. 707
3. A copy of this letter came to the attention of the author through the courtesy of Mr. W. H. Marwick.

work of Philip Wickstead and Hugh V. Herford who organized and collected subscriptions on his behalf. It was help gladly given by those who had known Trevor, and gratefully received by him. It lightened a very difficult and lonely period of his life. Miss Hunston, H. V. Herford's housekeeper, told the present writer:

> Trevor was good looking, he wore a beard. In the 1920s he was a bit shabby. H. V. had to apologize for him and tell of the good work he had done when he was younger.

A. J. Waldegrave told the author of visiting Trevor, and of finding him bravely facing the loneliness and poverty of his last years, without complaint, and without demands on his family and friends:

> Trevor at 73 had the same child-like simplicity he had at 40. In appearance he had a 'weak mouth', a sort of tiny twist in his mouth which was particularly obvious when he dispensed with his beard. He had a charming personality; he carried his attitude of 'aloofness from leadership' to an extreme. He was no orator, though he had a charming voice, resonant and pleasant. His manner was modest and frank. When I visited him he was living alone in a single room, though I believe his daughter came to see him regularly. His living conditions were not the most comfortable one could desire.

Independence and Freedom were very much the goal of Trevor's life, yet even here he could not be dogmatic. When his daughter, Marie, was strongly attracted to the Roman Catholic faith he made no objection to her proposed action. He told her that either the Quaker or the Roman way was the closest to true religion, either the authority of the unanimous decision of a group, or the authority of one set apart to that particular office. Marie was accepted as a member of the Roman Church shortly after her father's death, but he had shown no indication of similar leanings. He died a 'Unitarian' with the qualification that he never truly was in sympathy with Unitarian doctrines, but that he appreciated the freedom they had given him. In his letter to Short he sums up his position:

JOHN TREVOR

More than fifty years ago I devoted my life to the discovery of a religion based on facts to replace the religion based on tradition on which I had been brought up, and which I had lived in intensely. It is only recently that I have been able to arrive at a general philosophy of life which unifies all my experience. I have the new material accumulated for a dozen books on the subject, but my brains are failing rather badly. Both reading and writing bring on headaches, so that continuous brain work has become impossible. For the last few years I have been interesting a group of young friends in my ideas by sharing my mental and spiritual life with them. I am not seeking to make disciples of them. I regard discipleship as one of the many devils that make progress so exceedingly difficult. We should all live at first hand with life, and build up our convictions from our own experience.

> Unitarianism I am completely in despair of, as indeed I am of all churches. They are all dependent on the capitalist class for their maintenance. The result is obvious and inevitable. God is working outside the churches, and in the mass the churches are opposing Him. It is a tragic situation, and I can see no end to it but the breaking up of our Capitalist Christian civilisation. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." . . .[1]
>
> I believe in living dangerously. The curse of the churches is that they believe in Safety First."

On the seventh of January, 1930, at the age of 75, John Trevor left this life.

<u>Appreciations</u>:

This biographical sketch would not be complete without some further indication of the way he impressed those who knew him. Ernest Williams described him as "a gentle, unaffected man, a little below medium height, fair, with a finely developed head, and a far away look in his blue eyes". Mr. Williamson of Salford, who remembered him well, spoke of him as a "wiry little man, about five feet eight inches tall, not broad nor stout, of sallow complexion" whose speaking manner was "quiet, but free", who

---

1. Stanley S. Trevor, in a letter to the present writer, states: "My father once told me that he lost interest in the Labour Church largely because it tended to become merely a Sunday meeting of Trade Unionists and so lost its religious character."

"gesticulated and moved about quietly", who was "fervent and embued with enthusiasm", but who was "never dogmatic"; "Trevor's manner was not 'ministerial'; it was rather 'in mufti'; but his whole background was religious. His whole heart was in the Labour Movement. He attracted attention, particularly of the young people." Mrs. Dickinson, who as a young woman was a member of the Manchester Labour Church during Trevor's time, said: "Trevor was a man I admired. He might be considered aloof. He could hold his audience for he had good ideas, and his sermons were like conversations. He believed in prayer. He had 'something different' about him, something mystic. He had a fine face."

Most people who knew Trevor noticed this mystical quality both of his appearance and of his manner. It is perhaps most completely described by Dr. Hall, a unitarian minister who served at Norwich and frequently spoke at the Labour Church there during the years 1900 to 1908. Dr. Hall had met Trevor on only one or two occasions, but was much impressed by him:

> Trevor impressed me as one who wanted to bring out the spiritual side in this life through material means of expression. He was obviously an idealist, even in his appearance. He was very spiritually minded. As I remember him he was mentally and physically alert, and rather tense. He was unassuming, but had a radiant personality. He was frail, but yet alive, with the virtue going out of him; He was much concerned with life in this world; He impressed me as very much "otherworldly". He believed the Labour Movement could be infused with spiritual life.

Philip Henry Wicksteed's impressions of Trevor are preserved in the former's biography written by C. H. Herford.

> In Trevor, Wicksteed, with the moving humility which was always his, recognized a man who, otherwise frail and ineffectual, possessed something of poetic and prophetic power in the presence of which he felt himself "commonplace and timidly compromising."

> Like Browning's Sordello he seemed to be forever attempting, in vain, to "fit to the finite his infinity", and he betrayed part of the secret of his failure in the casual remark that "man can only express the infinity of his nature by being everything by turns". But another part of the secret was his absorption in his own thoughts and emotions.[1]

Perhaps Marie Trevor's comments are the best -- the most complete and most fitting -- with which to close this section:

> My father had a remarkable ability to build things up quickly. But he had no interest in building up for himself. He was not interested in building up a reputation or any sense of importance. He had no business instinct. The 'official mind' used to worry him. He had no patience with obtuse people who were tied to officialdom and were not able to see above a certain dimension.
>
> He often used to speak of having a mystical consolation, of being happy in his reassurance as to his further life, and as to what he was doing.
>
> My father was almost a saint, though he could be troublesome as all saints can. He could have been happier and more effective if he could have belonged to a religious community. He was practical in everyday life, but impractical in his ideals, though he was always ready to take the consequence of his actions without complaint. He was charming to talk to. Difficulties which might not be settled by writing could be solved by meeting, or at least he could agree to disagree within friendship. He was sincere, and never showed animosity. He always restrained criticism.[2]

---

1. C. H. Herford: Philip Henry Wicksteed pp. 99 & 217.
2. This statement, like most of those in this section, was given verbally to the present writer.

O beautiful my country!
Be there a nobler care
Than all thy wealth of commerce,
Thy harvests waving fair;
Be it thy pride to life up
The manhood of the poor;
Be thou to the oppressed
Fair Freedom's open door!

For thee our father's suffered,
For thee they toiled and prayed!
Upon thy holy altar
Their willing lives they laid.
Thou hast no common birthright,
Grand memories on thee shine;
The blood of pilgrim nations
Commingled flows in thine.

O beautiful, my country!
Round thee in love we draw;
Thine be the grace of Freedom,
The majesty of Law.
Be Righteousness thy sceptic,
Justice thy diadem;
And on thy shining forehead
Be Peace the crowning gem.

-- F. L. Hosmer
(L.C. Hymn Book No. 14)

CHAPTER II

THE AGE TO WHICH THE IDEA CAME.

The idea of the Labour Church, first enunciated by John Trevor, was a spark which ignited a fire. Had the tinder not been dry it could not bave been, but conditions were just right; Labour congregations sprang up here and there over the whole countryside. If we are to understand this aspect of the late-Victorian era we must take a brief look at the preceding decades. We must remember, too, that it takes about twenty years for the new ideas of any age to become the possession of ordinary citizens -- that the significant developments and attitudes of any decade are not, till half a century later at least, the characteristic factors in the cultural life of the working classes.

The Effects of Education:

Perhaps one of the most significant factors of the late-Victorian age was the development of universal primary education. The Act of 1870 brought over half of the children from the streets to join the remainder in schools. It took time to build adequate classrooms, to develop a curriculum, and to find trained teachers (or to train them on the job), and even then the effects were not to be seen till a generation of children had passed through the new schools and were established in their communities. It was the late eighties before the full effects of the measure could be appraised, and even then the lower middle class, who were in the important positions of sub-management, and who had gone to school in the fifties and sixties, had received for the most part a poor formal education.

It must be recognized that, allowing due credit for the improvements that were made, the English educational system was still not of the best. Working class people seldom received adequate secondary schooling, and often the teachers in the primary schools were poorly qualified. In such matters there was a sharp contrast between England and Scotland where a high standard of secondary or university training was available to nearly every 'lad of parts'.

The number of newspapers, journals, and new editions of books in the eighties and nineties attest to a much expanded reading public[1] -- but the general effect was much wider than a mere spread of literacy: School attendance was for many children their first experience of cleanliness and order, even of space, air, and light. Many who had previously known only cramped slum quarters now spent a good portion of each day in spacious well-ventilated and adequately heated classrooms. Then the reading material, because it introduced its readers to a wider world than had been known, left minds more receptive to new ideas.

<u>The Effect of the Ballot</u>:

The operation of the new Board Schools was largely a local concern, requiring the election of trustees who would operate the institution under a system of government inspection and grants. Through it the electorate (though mainly only in the towns, for the rural areas were served by Parish Schools) gained a consciousness of its power and possibilities, and large numbers of people gained experience in democratic processes of public control. Coupled

---

1. The intellectual level of these show clearly that the increase was largely among those whose formal education did not exceed the primary level.

with the Franchise Act of 1867, the Ballot Act of 1872, and the further reforms of 1885 (which virtually granted adult male suffrage and a fairer redistribution of constituencies), the way was prepared for the Local Government Bill of 1888 (which had been pioneered by the municipal reforms in Birmingham under Chamberlain). The 'Vote' rapidly assumed concrete and practical meaning -- something which ordinary working class people could concern themselves with. The political activity of Labour was beginning.

Trade Unionism:

New Model Trade Unions, like the Amalgamated Society of Engineers began to assume some prominence twenty years after the collapse of the Grand National Union in 1834. In the intervening years there had been little activity, but in the period leading up to 1867, Unions were developing on the pattern of Friendly Societies for mutual self-help. Earlier in the century a movement of self-help and adult education, characterized by the Mechanic's Institutes (begun in 1823) and the Co-operative movement (Rochdale, 1844), had been momentarily slowed by the adverse legislative enactments prohibiting Unions as 'combinations in restraint of trade' (the original act of 1799, the modifications of 1824 and 1825, and various court decisions as to its application). The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge ceased in 1847, but its effects lasted on. Its clear and concise text books of instruction, aimed at individual improvement, disparagement of strike action, etc., were read and studied for many years, influencing all the movements of mutual self-help. In Trade Unionism of the fifties and sixties benefits in time of emergency rather than

bargaining between employer and employee was the main object. Then came the unfavourable judicial decision of 1867 which took from them legal protection against embezzlement, by denying them the status of "friendly societies". The existing laws against conspiracy in restraint of trade (which had been somewhat alleviated in 1859 but made more stringent again in 1871) were applied to Trade Unions. Not until the bill of 1875 remedied the worst of these disabilities did the whole movement gain a fresh start.

The Amalgamated Societies increased in members and strength, but, what was even more important, the foundations were laid for the New Unionism by the legalizing of strike action. Workmen could legally try to compel employers to accept terms more advantageous to the employee by negotiation backed by the threat of withholding labour and of peaceful picketing. This right had been obtained largely through the political significance of Labour's newly granted vote, so it was natural that younger union members particularly should look to political action as the means of achieving long-range objectives.

Under the leadership of John Burns, Tom Mann, Ben Tillett, Annie Besant, Will Thorne, and others, a 'New Unionism' began to grow throughout the eighties as the idea of united action began to spread through the great army of unskilled labourers. The lowering of membership dues (which meant more members) and a corresponding lack of emphasis on the 'Friendly Society' function of the organization (which meant no vested interests to protect) made possible a Union which was not afraid to risk its position. The "Fighting Unions" which could successfully carry out the London Dockers Strike were born during the last half of the decade.

These developments in education, political status, and trade union legality led to new attitudes in public activity. No longer were workmen to be content to leave matters of government entirely in the hands of 'their betters' whose 'station in life' was to govern. No longer was their attitude one of resignation because no effective means short of revolution were available to make changes. Democratic control by means of the ballot was recognized as the future instrument of reform.

Employment and the Standard of Living:

England in the sixties and the seventies had been rising on the crest of prosperity; she was the 'workshop of the world'. An ever increasing demand for her exports, a relative immunity from international disputes and wars, and her favourable polition of domestic agriculture meant that real wages were steadily rising. The worst effects of the industrial revolution were hidden; people in comfortable circumstances could take refuge from the obvious facts of poverty and slums by looking at the achievements of industry, the possibilities of emigration and colonization, and by putting faith in the 'inevitability' of progress[1]. But the illusion was destroyed. Real wages ceased to rise in 1873; recession in agriculture came in 1875; for the next ten years conditions went from bad to worse, with crop failures as well as poor prices making more evident than ever the decline in the number of people employed on the land. Farm labourers, some of whom had previously owned their farms, but

---

1. The early-Victorian ideas of 'progress' were revised, but essentially strengthened by Darwin's evolutionary theories and by the whole expanding horizon of men's knowledge as science opened up whole new fields of research.

who could not compete with the large estates, crowded into the towns in search of work. The industrial proletariat rapidly increased in number[1]. Slums which were already undrained and unpoliced now became severely overpopulated. Decline in foreign trade[2] meant less work and lower wages. The operation of the Poor Laws still enabled the factory ownerx to hold down the cost of production by paying extremely low wages; what industry did not pay for the subsistence of the working force, the poor rates did, through outdoor relief. The Poor Law (amendment) Act of 1834 had applied the penal attitude in the treatment of poverty, but, particularly in the industrial north, had not succeeded in eliminating outdoor relief.

Unemployment (which up to this time had been analyzed as overpopulation) became a serious national problem. While reaction to it was mainly one of moral protest, a few people did begin to recognize factors which were not generally accepted till the work of Beveridge was incorporated in the unemployment insurance acts of the Lloyd George government. Unemployment in the Iron Foundry and Boiler Makers' Societies rose from barely 1% in 1872-73 to 20% in 1879.[3] The revelations of the Royal Commissions on the conditions of the poor, on sweating, and on unemployment, coupled with the statistical investigations of Booth into the London situation and the Fabian dissemination and examination of statis-

---

1. Cf. Birnie, Economic History of the British Isles, pp. 258ff. Between 1851 and 1871 the urban population had nearly doubled.
2. Cf. Pauline Gregg, A Social and Economic History of Britain 1760 - 1955, charts, pp. 368f.
3. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, The History of Trade Unionism, p. 348.

tics did much to make the public aware of the problems.

The burden of the depression of the eighties rested on the working people. The middle and upper classes, and even the skilled tradesmen, enjoyed relative security and prosperity. It was the working man whose income was never quite sufficient, who also had to face the possibility that tomorrow his job might no longer exist.

Emergence of Socialism:

In response to the problems of the eighties there emerged a new idea -- socialism. It is rather necessary to emphasize the novelty of this idea to the English mind. It was not continuous with the Chartist movement of the thirties and forties, which, though remembered, was quite a dead issue. Nor was it in the direct line of, though it was greatly influenced by, the Christian Socialism of Maurice and Kingsley[1] or the educational reforms of Arnold. Neither was it a wing of the Marxist organizations already gaining strength on the Continent, though Marx was Hyndman's main inspiration[2]. It was rather a typical English concern for people -- a humanitarian program arising out of utilitarian philosophy[3], evangelical traditions, and the writings of men like

---

1. Early English Socialism was largely Owenite, with emphasis on voluntary co-operative production.
2. Hyndman was not supported by Marx and Engels because he had slighted them by not giving proper acknowledgement when putting forward their ideas. However Eleanor Marx and Dr. Aveling were members of the S. D. F. Many prominent Socialists came to their position through other writers. For instance Tom Mann gave as much credit to Henry George as to Karl Marx in his 'awakening to the truth of the class struggle'. Cf. Dona Torr, Tom Mann and His Times, pp. 179f.
3. Birnie, Op. Cit., p. 328, develops the idea that the early socialists owe many of their ideas to Ricardo, especially to his loosely stated theory that labour is the source of value.

Illustration from a "Merrie England Bazaar"

Souvenir Booklet

Carlyle, Dickens, Ruskin, etc. It was a recognition that the accepted views of "laissez-faire"[1], free trade, and individual effort were not accomplishing "the greatest good of the greatest number".

During the eighties numerous fellowships and societies arose, each advocating some aspect of the socialist or collectivist approach to the pressing problems of human and national welfare. The Democratic Federation, a radical Marxist group, was formed in 1881, to be reorganized three years later as a political party, the Social Democratic Federation.[2] In the latter year, William Morris withdrew from the S. D. F. and formed the Socialist League.[3]

---

1. Cf. Birnie, Op. Cit., pp. 323ff.
2. Successive disruptions characterized the history of the S. D. F. In 1884 the anarchist element, following Wm. Morris, seceeded and formed the Socialist League. In the same year a Scottish section of the Federation broke away and formed the Scottish Land and Labour League. In 1889 this group agreed to dissolve if all Scottish locals of the S. D. F. would do the same, and form the Scottish Socialist Federation, an agreement which was not fully carried out in action. The Scottish Socialist Party was formed in 1903; the Socialist Party of Great Britain came into being in 1905; in 1908 the S. D. F. made a bid for wider public support by changing its name to S. D. P. (Party). In 1911 the S. D. P. joined with a group of I. L. P. members who were dissatisfied with Labour Representation Committee policies, and formed the British Socialist Party. During the First Great War, Hyndman (pro war) broke with the B. S. P. (anti war) and formed the National Socialist Party, which later returned to the name S. D. F. After the war the various Marxist parties came together to form the British Communist Party. All such groups have been a minority of British Socialists.
3. Morris withdrew from the Socialist League in 1890 because it had been 'captured' by anarchists. He retained leadership of a small group who called themselves the Hammersmith Socialist Society. Morris died in 1896.

The New Fellowship, a London semi-religious organization, gave birth in 1884 to the Fabian Society.[1] Stewart Headlam's Guild of St. Matthew (1887), Edward Carpenter's Sheffield Socialists (1883), and several others came into being before the end of the decade.

But the working classes were slow to take up these new ideas; they did not give wide support to these societies. The total membership of all of them is estimated by Pelling at less than 2,000, and many of these were able writers and speakers who were not of labouring class. They edited journals like Justice (S. D. F.), Commonweal (Socialist League), Seedtime (The New Fellowship), Our Corner, The Link, Today, The Practical Socialist, The Christian Socialist, and The Socialist; they took every oportunity to speak from public platforms, but still their following was limited.

Part of the reason for Labour's slow response was the revolutionary attitude of the largest socialist group -- the S. D. F. English working-class public opinion was much more sympathetic to

---

1. The "New Fellowship", or as it was often known "The Fellowship of the New Life", was basically a group of young disciples of "the wandering scholar" Thomas Davidson (1840-1900), a Scotsman. The purpose of the Fellowship was to explore the possibilities of a communal way of living and to study the conditions of the good life. Davidson 'wandered on' after a few months, to form a similar Fellowship in New York. The leadership of the London group was taken by Percival A. Chubb. The Fellowship lasted till 1898. It published Seedtime. Most of its members, particularly H. S. Salt and P. A. Chubb, were also active in the Union of Ethical Societies.
The Fabians, a section who withdrew from the Fellowship after Davidson's departure, named themselves after the Roman General, Fabius Cunctator, the Delayer, who waited for the right time to strike against Hanibal. The name was to symbolize their cautious policy of 'permeation'. The Fabians included the Webbs, G. B. Shaw, Annie Besant, Graham Wallas, Hubert Bland, William Clarke, Sydney Olivier, and many lesser known figures. Several of the Fabians retained membership in the New Fellowship. Cf. G. D. H. Cole, Socialist Thought, Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 106.

the evolutionary and democratic methods urged by the Fabians,[1] but the secularist bias of some prominent early leaders like Annie Besant delayed wide support. An irreligious attitude was quite as unacceptable to British working-classes in late-Victorian times as was a revolutionary one.

It took a colourful and dramatic event to arouse the interest of, and the first substantial support by, British Labour. When John Burns and his colleagues conducted the successful, and peaceful, Dockers Strike in London, Socialism was a popular movement was underway.

The Climate Of Ideas:

> In everything the old overlaps the new -- in religion, in thought, in family custom. There is never any clear cut; there is no single movement when all Englishmen adopt new ways of life and thought.[2]

But because our human thought requires specific events to which the development of new modes of thought may be related, we try to pin-point all progress. But we must learn to look beyond the arbitrary date -- the historical hat-peg -- and seek to discover the ideas, attitudes, and movements that have played a formative part in their history. We must remember that the new socialist ideas grew out of their past and that they were transmitted to a people whose philosophy was largely the Utilitarian ideas of Bentham and Mill, whose economic theories were the "Laissez-faire" doctrines

---

1. "The Fabians built much more on Mill and Jevons than on Marx, or on any Socialist thinker; for them non-revolutionary Socialism was the logical outcome of the Utilitarian philosophy -- the means, in the modern world, of achieving the greatest happiness of the greatest number." -- G. D. H. Cole, The Development of Socialism During the Past Fifty Years, p. 5.
2. Trevelyan, ENGLISH SOCIAL HISTORY, introduction p. xi

of Adam Smith, whose religious and moral discipline was strongly evangelical[1], whose society was definitely stratified[2], and whose ambitions were for refinement of culture and comfort[3].

In working-class circles there was a strong persistence of a religious motive, although the practice of religious ritual was itself in decline[4]. So powerful was the 'appeal of lost faith'[5] that even agnostics and secularists were hampered with the 'vestiges of a faith they could not defend but which they would not abandon'[6]. During the period there was a gradual modification of habits. No longer is church attendance a sine qua non of middle-class respectability, nor is Bible reading as prominent as in a previous generation. But Sunday is still a day set apart for serious things, and therefore the most appropriate day for expounding the philosophy of socialism. Respectability, which is largely codified evangelicalism, though declining, is still a major factor in British life.

---

1. The evangelical and largely Wesleyan influence was politically conservative and restraining. Halevy, quoted by Trevelyan, states: "Evangelicalism was thus the conservative force which restored England from the balance momentarily destroyed by the revolutionary forces." Cf. Trevelyan, English Social History p. 481. Against this point of view we must consider Canning's contention that it was the relief of the worst effects of extreme poverty by the Poor Laws which prevented English revolution. Perhaps the two factors are not unrelated.
2. Cf. Ernest Barker, The Character of England, article by Richard Law, "The Individual and the Community", especially pp. 47f.
3. Here is perhaps a clue to the peculiarly English connection of aesthetic and socialist ideas; i.e. aesthetic appreciation is a characteristic of the better life towards which socialism is but a means of advance. See Wm. Morris's letter to C. E. Maurice in J. W. Mackail, Life of William Morris, p. 105.
4. Cf. Barker, Op. Cit., article by A. P. Williams, "Religion", especially pp. 82f. Cf. also R. C. K. Ensor, England 1870-1914, on religious changes, especially pp. 307ff.
5. Cf. Faber, G.C., Jowett; A Portrait with a Background,
6. G. M. Young, Victorian England, Portrait of an Age, p. 110.

The development of science, and particularly the rapid development of biological theories of evolution, had taken away belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. No longer could the Genesis stories be accepted as literal fact; if Genesis were ancient myth, what of the remainder of scripture? A protestant nation like England could not seek refuge in an inerrant Church[1] so there were but three practical alternatives -- one might embrace agnosticism; one might place one's faith in an inerrant system of economics; or one might seek relief in a religion of experience and sentiment.

Agnosticism was too distinctly contrary to the British accepted ideas of respectability to make much headway unless it presented itself as an 'Ethical Religion'[2]; an inerrant system of economics was too reminiscent of European revolutions to appeal to a peaceful law-abiding, constitution-respecting nation unless it could present itself as an evolutionary process compatible with religious ideas; and a religion of sentiment would be too emotional unless it could appear to be scientifically based upon actual experience. That left Victorian Englishmen a large range of religions of experience which might or might not be within orthodox traditions.

G. M. Young phrases the fundamental problem of all late Victorian ethics as follows:

> What are the duties which the conception of Being as Process

---

1. The influencial Oxford Movement was, particularly in its Anglo-Catholic aspects, still a minority one.
2. Charles Bradlaugh is perhaps the exception which proves the rule. His popularity was amazing; elected to Parliament in 1880, 1881, 1882, and 1884, he was not allowed to affirm and take his seat. Only when he was re-elected in 1886 was he allowed to become an M. P. despite his 'unfortunate' atheistic and secular beliefs.

> imposes on those to whom it has been revealed and who acknowledge no other revelation?[1]

The answers given were many, but nearly all considered religion as a sentiment or an emotional support to concepts whose validity rested on a non-religious basis[2]. Only one of many answers is the concern of this present thesis. What is of general interest in this brief picture of the late-Victorian era is a view of the ways of propagation open to those who would communicate one of these answers to the public.

There were the journals and newspapers, and of course, the printed books, all of which were forums of debate; but before the late eighties these would reach only a small section of the public -- an educated, reasonable, and an influential section it is true, but still a relatively small section. The penny pamphlets and propaganda journals which would have strong appeal to the newly literate general public were a thing of the future[3]. The sermon was still the standard vehicle by which serious truth was proclaimed. The public orator might command a large audience, but still he could not exercise the same influence or authority he could if he were speaking from a pulpit. Yet by-and-large, with several notable exceptions, the clergy were steeped in the old accepted ideas, and associated by social status and personal interest, with the status-quo. The most important mode of communication was denied to the proponents of the new ideas. The solution had been suggested at various times. James Mill had expounded a plan for turning the

---

1. Young, Op. Cit., p. 112.
2. Trevelyan characterizes the late-Victorian era as " . . . a period of quasi-religious movement away from religion." Op. Cit. p. 569.
3. Ensor, Op. Cit., pp. 310ff.

Church into a Benthamite institution of public utility[1]. The Chartists had organized churches of their own. But secularization had not proceeded far enough to allow the public, even a small section of it, to think of the Church as anything other than the institutions of the Establishment or of Non-conformity. But in the late eighties and the nineties the number of proposals for "churches" of all descriptions were numerous indeed. Conditions were ripe for making the 'sermon' the servant of the new 'religion'.

With the nineties came a lightening of the financial depression of the previous decade, allowing a freer expression of the growing humanitarian and philanthropic urges which were increasingly becoming the characteristic of the working-classes. Less harsh treatment of children and an increasing tenderness on all fronts seemed the order of the day. At the same time there was a visible relaxation in the disciplines of respectability and evangelicalism. The "Eternal Microscope" which examined the details of life and the recesses of the heart and which gave to the slightest deviation infinite consequences in terms of social acceptance and the kind of 'hereafter' one might enjoy was changing its focus from the individual to his society. This was partly the result of the 'High Church' emphasis on the Church in contrast with the 'Low Church' evangelical stress on individual salvation.

The accomplishments of mid-Victorian days in the extension of the franchise, the institution of universal education, and the control of the worst excesses of industrialization encouraged a critical attitude toward the structure of society. No longer was

---

1. Young, Op. Cit., p. 67.

it an ordained system: government could change it, and the electorate could change a government. There was a corresponding decline in the traditional respect for the aristocracy, and an outright contempt for the landlords who had profiteered through speculation in land values. The new groupings by which employers faced their employees in larger and larger numbers with less and less personal knowledge hastened the process.[1] "The sinister interest of privilege", that "lion that blocks every path"[2] could be challenged through government. The realization that, contrary to the accepted economic theory, wealth for a few does not mean the welfare of the many, that "laissez-faire" means misery for the labourer, brought a growing determination that the "lion" would not just be challenged, but that it would be exterminated. This could be done by Socialism.

The age, ushered in by the Dockers' Strike, in which Socialism became one of the movements of British Labour, was a time of rapid transition. G. M. Young has called it the epilogue of an age and the pre-history of another -- a time when the rocky core of an old individualism was being metamorphosed into something new.

---

1. "The new captains of industry . . . found no recognition in a country where political power was monopolized by the landowners. Accordingly they allied themselves with the Whigs and the Radicals and waged war on class privilege. In this political and social struggle, the Tory landowners sustained two important defeats, the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832 and the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. Thereafter, the rivalry of the two great sections of property owners diminished, and during the later nineteenth century they began to draw together in alliance against their common foe, the industrial proletariat. . . . Hedged into factory towns, subjected to a common industrial discipline, and suffering from the same economic disabilities, the industrial proletariat gradually developed a class consciousness, which made it a political force to be reckoned with."
   -- Birnie, Economic History of the British Isles, p. 252.
2. The phrases come from G. M. Young.

Courage working brothers,
The day has come at last,
The clouds are lifting quickly,
The night is breaking fast.
Be strong, then, and of good courage
Our cause is just and right,
And he who holds by Justice,
Is sure to win the fight.

Chorus: They sing with all your strength, boys.
Let all men hear your song,
'Tis Union makes us free men,
'Tis Freedom makes us strong.

Then march together, brothers,
With firm united tread,
There's hope for those who follow,
There's strength for those who lead.
With hope, then, and with courage,
Will quit ourselves like men;
And God, who hates oppression,
Shall give the right again.

O brothers! be united,
And hold together close,
There's strength to us in Union,
There's weakness for our foes.
Then let us not divide, men,
But all one body be,
As one in toil and wrong, men,
So one in Liberty.

-- L.C. Hymn Book, No. 29

The Great Dock Strike:

We have already indicated that our convenient 'historical hat-peg' will be the Dockers' Strike of 1889, but the story begins a few years earlier[1]. The mid eighties were particularly difficult for the general labourer. While in 1882 unemployment stood at 2.3% and a year later at 2.6%, in 1884 it had jumped to 8.1% and continued to rise to a maximum of 10.2% in 1886. It was unskilled labour that took the brunt of the trouble, trouble made more acute by the harsh administration of the Poor Laws. As the situation began to improve, (in 1887 unemployment fell to 7.6%, in 1888 to 4.9%, and in 1889 back to a normal of 2.1%), unified action by general labour to prevent recurrance of a similar situation seemed a reasonable solution. Unions had warded off the worst of the situation for the skilled trades; perhaps it could do as much for the whole of the labour force. Then, there was a growing thought that perhaps political action held the key to the ultimate solution.

> The new social thinking and feeling that went into the making of the new British Socialist movement of the 1890s were already well on their way before the depression ended, and the trade revival cleared the road for the great Trade Union outburst of 1889.[2]

This outburst also took the form of agitation for political independence of Liberals and Conservatives. The first specific move was made in Scotland, where, in 1887 Keir Hardie stood at Mid Lanark as the first independent Labour candidate for Parliament. Out of the election campaign came the Scottish Labour Party.

---

1. Cole, A Short History of British Working Class Movements, p. 280: "The memorable Dock Strike of 1889 was only the outstanding event in a great process of change."
2. Cole, Socialist Thought, Vol. 3, Pt. 1, p. 133.

In London Annie Besant was making a name for herself as a writer and agitator for reform. In the early summer of 1888 she wrote an article for The Link in which she denounced the conditions under which women in match factories were working. Much to her surprise it touched off a strike by nearly 700 London match-girls. Unexpectedly plunged into the middle of industrial dispute, Mrs. Besant rose to the challenge. Enlisting the help of Herbert Burrows, she set about raising funds to support the women in their strike, and personally gave leadership and advice, with a satisfactory result. The strike succeeded in bettering the working conditions in the match factories.

The next event of importance took place a year later. Tom Mann, John Burns, and Will Thorne had organized a Union of Gas Workers in May; a few months later they demanded an eight hour day, and had won their demand without strike action. It was an encouraging victory. It was only a few days later, on August the thirteenth, that they were called upon to assist Ben Tillett.

Tillett had organized the Tea Porters' and General Labourers' Union in 1887. On August 13th, 1889, there had been a disagreement; Tillett had called a strike. The idea quickly spread through the largely unorganized dock workers; within a matter of several hours over 10,000 men had quit their work, demanding a 6d. per hour wage, special payment for overtime, abolition of sub-contracting and piece work, and a four hour minimum period of employment. As they came in their thousands to join the new Unions, they took as their battle cry: "Trade Unionism for all!" Mann and Burns were asked to help organize them.

Burns, Mann, and Tillett transformed the small Tea Porters' Union into the Dock, Wharf, Riverside, and General Workers' Union. They managed the strike carefully, using the picturesque and powerful leadership of Burns[1]. Often his personal presence, easily identified because of his famous white straw hat, was the means of maintaining peace and discipline. He made it a point to co-operate with the police, and was thus able to organize and lead the great parades through the streets of London which won the sympathy and support of the citizens. Public subscription soon created a fund from which could be paid fairly generous strike pay to Union members and food allowances to casual labourers who might be tempted to become black-leg workers or strike breakers. But even with British support, to the sum of £20,000, the ship owners and dock operators would have starved the workers out in two weeks, save that the strike caught the imagination of the world. Help began to pour in from many quarters, especially from Australia which sent over £30,000. At the end of a month, with mediation by Cardinal Manning, and belated expressions of sympathy from some Congregational clergy expressed through Dr. Parker, the strike was settled. The Dockers won their 'tanner per hour' and 'new unionism' was a power with which to reckon. Burns and Mann resigned from the S. D. F. to follow where the new movement would lead.

<u>New Unionism</u>:

New Unionism was, in the words of G. D. H. Cole

---

1. Burns had been a leading agitator in the protest against unemployment since 1885. He had been a leader in the S. D. F. organized parade of Unemployed in January, 1886, in the "Bloody Sunday" demonstration of 1887, and in the funeral procession for Linnell, a labourer killed by police during an 1888 demonstration.

> . . . the child of Socialism out of unemployment, with the distraught Liberal Party as midwife.[1]

It was the child of Socialism for its leaders, young men with little or no connection with earlier political groups, were almost entirely of Socialist persuasion; it was out of unemployment, for the sufferings of the mid-eighties had provided the strong motivation; and Liberalism was the distraught midwife for it was the educational, political, and industrial reform policies of the Liberals which had made it possible.

The new unionism that came into prominence following the London Dockers' strike[2] was not merely the expression of an economic and political creed. It was rather a movement of simply seekers after a new life. Men who were dissatisfied with conditions as they had known them in their earlier years were determined to so reform society that such conditions could not be repeated. Their minds were open to all forward looking reform programs if these could hold out hope for a better world.

While new unionism began in London, it was in the industrial and evangelical North (rather than in the commercial and agnostic city) that it found the conditions for its rapid growth. This does not necessarily imply that the workers of the North were Church and Chapel goers[3]. On the contrary, the Churches and Chapels were becoming alarmed at the absence of working classes at their services. Numerous investigations were made to find out why[4].

---

1. Cole, Socialist Thought, Vol. 3, Pt. 1, p. 133.
2. Union membership more than tripled from 1885 to 1890. Though some of this phenomenal increase soon fell off, the net result was a doubling.
3. For a careful investigation of the factors involved, see Inglis, Ken, "English Churches and the Working Classes, 1880-1900", a Doctoral Thesis presented to Nuffield College, Oxford.
4. Keir Hardie answered the query: "Why aren't workers attending

Manchester was a great metropolitan center whose industries were creating a new body of industrial labourers out of folk whose former manner of life had been rural. Living conditions in the new cities and towns round and about were poor, and poverty was rampant. Long established Union traditions were not strong enough, nor were locals particularly interested in channelling the widespread expressions of industrial dissatisfaction. When Will Thorne and Pete Curran began touring the north, organizing new type unions, there was a warm favourable reception awaiting them, particularly among the semi-skilled and unskilled labourers in the textile industries.

For Bradford 1890 was a critical year. There was a depression in the wool trade which coincided with a strike in the Manningham Mills. Out of this came the formation of the Bradford Labour Union, clearly socialist in its thinking and frankly independent in its politics[1]. The invitations to Ben Tillett and Robert Blatchford to contest the Bradford seats in Parliament came from this Union.

Robert Blatchford, a well paid sports writer for the Sunday Chronicle had been converted to Socialism by his observations of poverty during the unemployment crisis of the mid-eighties, and by

---

Church or Chapel?" by the following statement: "Could it be wondered at? The Democracy was no more irreligious than was Jesus in His day. They were simply entering their protest against form and ceremonial as Jesus did." (Quotation from the Workman's Times of Jan. 27th, 1894.) Hardie spoke with the support of the working classes when he attacked class distinctions in the Churches. The workers, he claimed, " . . . would often find even the Churches marked off in sections, one part for those who did not care to associate with the common herd, the seats luxuriously cushioned and the kneeling stools well upholstered, in striking contrast to the accomodation for the poorer classes. . . . They were sometimes asked why the working man did not attend Church, but was it to be wondered at?"

1. This was largely due to attempts which had been made by groups of Liberal persuasion to legally prohibit free speech and assembly.

his reading of William Morris, Henry George, and the Fabians. He announced his full conversion in 1889. In 1890 and 1891 he used the columns of the Chronicle to support the cause of the Mannigham Strikers, and later, the cause of Labour generally, thus bringing to his superiors a demand from a certain Bishop that such articles be stopped. When Hulton, the owner of the Chronicle who did not like Socialism anyway, requested Blatchford to change the tone of his articles, Blatchford replied by resigning, and taking at least two other writers of the staff with him[1], and by establishing the Clarion which soon became one of the major centers of socialist and new unionist thinking.

The Bradford Labour Union was soon followed by a similar venture in the Colne Valley; then the Salford Labour Electoral Association announced that it would thereafter pursue an independent policy. In London the Labour Representation League was founded. Joseph Burgess, who had been editor of the Yorkshire Factory Times but who had gone to London to edit the Workman's Times, began to advocate the establishment of independent Labour groups for political purposes. Within a few months Trevor and Blatchford organized the Manchester Independent Labour Party, with its famous fourth clause -- a determined effort to break the 'Lib.-Lab.'policy of the Trade Unions. H. A. Atkinson, who had worked closely with Trevor during this period, claims that while Blatchford did the writing, the ideas in the Manchester constitution were largely Trevor's[2].

By 1892 independent Labour groups, many of them calling themselves

---

1. A. M. Thompson and Francis Fay. R. B. Suthers, at that time a clerk, followed later.
2. Cf. C. H. Herford, Philip Henry Wicksteed, p. 227, where a letter from Atkinson to H. V. Herford is quoted. In April, 1893, Trevor

Independent Labour Parties, were established all over Britain. There were also a number of Labour Churches, and 90 local Fabian branches, many of which transformed themselves into Labour Churches or I. L. P.s. These various Labour groups were only waiting a clear call before they would organize themselves into a national party. This call came when Keir Hardie proposed to the Trades Union Congress meeting in Glasgow in 1892 that a special Congress be called to form such a group, and then took the initiative into his own hands to prevent the idea from being shelved[1].

Independent Political Action:

The conference called to form a national Labour party was held on the 13th and 14th of January, 1893, in the Bradford Labour Institute, a building leased and operated by the Labour Church. The intention was to form a federation of all socialistic and Labour groups, but the old style trade unionists, the Fabians, and the S. D. F. held aloof, so it became a party instead, and adopted the name Independent Labour Party. The fundamental motives underlying its formation were largely ethical and humanitarian: elimination of avoidable misery of the poor, ill health, semi-starvation, etc., and a desire to assist the 'underdog' were the main objectives.

---

1. explained to readers of the Labour Prophet: "When the Labour Church was formed in Manchester there was no organised Labour Movement, as now understood, in existence. . . . The Labour Church caught on. Then I saw a danger -- that the Labour Church might begin to consider itself the Labour Party, and claim for itself independent political action. To remove this danger I proposed, last May-Day, the formation of an Independent Labour Party for Manchester and Salford, with Robert Blatchford for its President."

1. Similar proposals had been made at previous Congresses, only to be passed and left with no action taken.

> They wanted Socialism, fundamentally not because it would be efficient, but because it would promote Social Justice."[1]

The principle of federated action was not to come on a national scale till the formation of the Labour Representation Committee of 1900.

Just after the formation of the national I. L. P. the attention of the Labour world was focused on the Lancashire cotton workers (the card and blowing room hands) who managed to stay out on strike for five months, but were finally forced to return to work without obtaining all their demands. This was followed by a strike of some 400,000 coal miners who managed to obtain minimum wage protection. I. L. P. support for the strikers gained some trade union sympathy for political action.

Throughout 1893 and 1894, in spite of rising prices and static wage levels, there was a steady advance in I. L. P. organization and activity. In the latter year there were 280 affiliated branches.

In the General Election of 1895 the I. L. P. put 28 candidates in the field, but suffered a drastic defeat at the polles. Not only was there no candidate returned; most candidates secured only a few hundred votes. The high hopes of many socialists were dashed to the ground. Gains in socialist popularity were severely checked. For instance, the Trade Union Congresses of 1893 and 1894 had passed a good number of socialist resolutions. From 1895 to 1898 all such

---

1. Cole, Socialist Thought, Vol. 3, Pt. 1, p. 159. Most of the first executive of the I. L. P. were active in, or sympathetic to, the Labour Church movement. As the I. L. P. became more influential, more respectable, and more efficient as a political entity, as a tendency toward middle class support improved, and as it 'jockeyed' for Trade Union support, it increasingly became less Labour Church sympathetic, yet it retained the ethical emphasis for which the church stood.

resolutions were soundly defeated, though a few converts within the old unions were becoming prominent. It had been the belief of the early socialists that the moral fervour and enthusiasm which characterized the early movement was all that was necessary or important to reform the country. Now experience forced upon them the realization that political success demanded much more. A practical approach, with Trade Union support, would be required.[1]

During the period of reorientation with respect to the role and power of moral enthusiasm, local groups began to turn their attention to local concerns. Candidates were put forward in elections of Guardians, School Board members, and city councillors; many were successful. Municipal reform proved to be a field where socialism could be influential.

Socialism as a national political possibility again came into favour largely because of I. L. P. and Socialist support of the unsuccessful Amalgamated Engineers in the 'lock-out',[2] and similar backing given to the South Wales coal miners in their strike and lock-out of 1898.[3] In 1899 the T. U. C. again began to look with favour upon socialistic resolutions, and in 1900 adopted the measures leading to the formation of the Labour Representation Committee, a federation of all socialist and labour bodies to co-ordinate political

---

1. L. V. Thompson, biographer of Robt. Blatchford, mentioned to the present writer that Nunquam wrote A. M. Thompson at this time, stating that the I. L. P. was no longer the enthusiastic moral force it had first been. J. R. MacDonald's announcement that the I. L. P. was a possible field of endeavour also reflects this change of attitude.
2. In 1897 the engineers were kept out of work on the charge that Trade Unions were interfering in the 'managerial functions' of the firms.
3. It was the South Wales constituency of Merthyr that returned Hardie again and again to Parliament.

action and to give coherence to a Labour group in the House.[1] The L. R. C. became a more important body in 1902, after the Taff-Vale[2] decisions convinced Trade Unionists of the need of independent representation. When the L. R. C. was formed less than a fifth of the Trade Union membership affiliated. After the Taff-Vale difficulties became evident, affiliated union membership was approaching half.

The L. R. C. depended on Labour co-operation with the Liberal party, even though the formation of the Committee had meant formal severance of the Congress from Liberalism as an official policy. This offended the more dogmatic socialists of the S. D. F. and the leftish I. L. P., who tried to 'Socialize' the L. R. C., but failing to break the Lib.-Lab. alliance, withdrew in 1901. A division within the S. D. F. in 1903 led to the formation of the Socialist Party of Great Britain -- a small party of extreme Socialists; the main body of socialists, the I. L. P., were thus free to follow along with the L. R. C., and later to join wholeheartedly in the formation of the Labour Party.

---

1. All earlier experiments in this direction had failed. A Labour Representation League founded in 1867, represented in the House by Alexander McDonald, Thomas Burt, Henry Broadhurst, and Charles Bradlaugh, had faded out of existence in 1881, to be followed by the formation of the Labour Electoral Committee (1886 -- in 1887 it became the Labour Electoral Association in order to allow it to set up groups outside the framework of local Trade Councils.) The L. E. A. followed a Lib.-Lab. policy till 1896.
2. The Taff-Vale Railway Company successfully sued the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants for damages to the company incurred by a strike. Such a policy, if upheld, would be a death blow to the Trade Unions, through making effective strike action much too expensive for any union to contemplate.

Come, sons of Labour,
Workers in every sphere;
Come, listen while our brother
Speaks words our hearts to cheer.
He reads no musty pages
Of dubious ancient love,
But tells the hopeful tidings
Of better days in store.

Are you a British worker?
Then come and join our band;
The cause is yours, and needs you
Lend God a helping hand.
If you would raise your fellows,
If you would strike for right --
First, find the work want doing,
Then do it with your might.

The future of our children
Depends on what we do;
Let conscience be our tutor --
Each to himself be true.
In thought, in speech, in action,
Let justice be our aim,
And, proud that we are workers,
Be worthy of the name.

-- Will Payne
L.C. Hymn Book No. 31

CHAPTER III

THE IDEA FINDS EXPRESSION

A counterpart of the development of the Labour Movement in Great Britain was its dissatisfaction with the Churches, as evidenced by the large numbers of working people who were not attending either Church of Chapel. Prominent clergymen, much concerned about it, were conducting investigations to determine the underlying reasons.

Labour's Dissatisfaction with the Churches:

At a conference convened by Dr. Parker of the City Temple, London, (about 1892) it was charged

> . . . that clergy of all denominations were bad shepherds. They were running with the wolves. Unless the churches go to the working men, the working classes had no intention of going to the churches. The working men applauded all references to Jesus as a social reformer.[1]

Other investigations revealed that the usual organization of both Church and Chapel brought mill owners and works managers into prominence as deacons and office-bearers, but practically ignored ordinary labourers except as recipients of charity. Indeed, the labouring classes so identified the Churches with 'charity' that some went to services for the benefits they could receive, for often charity was 'morally' rationed on the basis of attendance at Divine Worship. No self-respecting workman would attend, nor allow his wife to attend, for fear of the manner in which his action might be interpreted by his fellow workmen.[2]

---

1. Lowe, David, Souvenirs of Scottish Labour, p. 27.
2. Cf. Inglis, Ken, "English Churches and the Working Classes, 1880-1900", unpublished thesis at Nuffield College, Oxford, p. 499.

The working classes increasingly became conscious of the specific grievances as they heard and read about the experiences of others. A few typical examples of these accounts will serve to give us an appreciation of their tone and attitude, and an insight into the mood of the early Labour Church congregations.

The first example concerns Keir Hardie, the leader of the I. L. P. Speaking to a Labour Church gathering in Bradford he said:

> The Christianity of the schools had had its day. Thank God it was passing away. Christianity today lay burried, bound up in the cerements of a dead and lifeless theology. It awaited decent burial; and they in the Labour movement had come to resuscitate the Christianity of Christ, to go back to the time when the poor should have the Gospel preached to them, and the Gospel should be good news of joy and happiness in this life, of God's Kingdom on earth as a preparation for that which was to come in the world beyond the grave.

This statement was misunderstood and criticized by Dr. Charles Leach of London who spoke rather pointedly about it at the Congregational Union then meeting in Bradford. Hardie was given the opportunity of rebuttal. After explaining what he had said he went on:

> . . . the reason why the Labour party today turns its back upon the Church is because the Church has turned its back upon Christ in this matter. (Amid cries of disapproval he continued) You get your congregations and preach to please their respectability. (He was interrupted, No! No!) You do, you do, you do! . . . and you forget the writhing and suffering masses of humanity outside.

Hardie later wrote of this episode:

> Dr. Leach got up and pitched into the Labour Church, and myself in particular. This didn't trouble me much, but when he, amid thunders of applause, denounced the men who set class against class, and prated of what he was doing, I felt a strong desire to speak out the thought that was burning within. Then, when the opportunity came, and I stood facing the respectable crowd who are the apologists for everything I deem evil, I fairly lost control of myself; and the picture of the poor half-timers, . . . of the millions of children of all ages wallowing in the filth -- moral and material -- of our slums, . . . of the soul wearing struggle for bread in which men and women are engaged, rose up before me, and what I said or what I did remains to this day un-

known to me, save in so far as the newspapers have revealed it.
In the calmness of my own room, I endorse every word I then used. The Church worships respectability and puts its ban on poverty. It takes the slum owner and the sweater to its bosom, and hands their victims over to everlasting perdition.[1]

In a rather pleasant bit of prose writing, Dangle of Clarion fame expressed his criticism:

> I remember with a shudder to this day how, returning from Sunday school one morning, I was so cowed and terrified by the teacher's fearful setting forth of the undefined Unpardonable Sin's inevitable consequences, that I knelt on a form in the public Jardin du Luxembourg in broad daylight, and frantically prayed for a heavenly sign that I had not yet this terrible sin committed; and I remember how, failing to get an answer to that appeal, my mind began to form doubts which caused me grave uneasiness, and drove me gloomily to conclude that I was foredoomed as a particularly and hopelessly "bad lot".
>
> (In adult life) . . . Never, until the formation of the Labour Church, did I conceive it possible for me to be associated again with a "religious" body; for religion had become so identified within my observation with black clothes, kid gloves, tall silk hats, and long faces that it and I appeared to have parted for ever. Yet I never ceased to claim for myself, in discussion with the orthodox, that I was in all the true essence of religion more religious than they. My religion, I told them, is not a cute speculation in futures, a gamble for post-mortem profit, whereby, as Carlyle puts it, some smaller quantum of earthly enjoyment may be exchanged for a larger quantum of celestial enjoyment. It is not a ticket, like the religion of the lady mentioned by Mrs. Stowe, which, 'being once purchased, and snugly laid away in a pocket book, is to be produced at the celestial gate to secure admission to heaven'. It is not a religion to help cowards to die, but a religion to teach brave men to live. . . . A religion which saves its groans for the woes of living men and women, and restricts its ceremonials to their alleviation. . . .
> Yet the word 'religion' had been so ill-sorted that it became questionable whether an honest man might call himself 'religious' consistently with self-respect. There were so many of its professors who, like the lady previously quoted, sat with punctilious satisfaction while their pastors denounced their commonest faults, and never thought that the sentiments had the slightest application to them; who heard the sermon and bowed the knee that they might cozen and cheat the more prosperously; who professed loathing for Judas Iscariot, and yet, in Ruskins words, made "their own little job" out of Christ every day by the unfair extortions of trade -- that one had really come to deem "religion" synonymous with cant, humbug, fraudulent banks, and every form of hypocritical, wholesale rascality.[2]

---

1. Prophet, Nov. 1892, pp. 84f,
2. Prophet, Nov. 1893, p. 105.

Miss Katherine St. John Conway who became Mrs. J. Bruce Glasier, tells of an incident in her own life:

> I was kneeling in All Saints Church, Clifton, then one of the richest ritualistic churches in the land, on All Saints Sunday. . . . At the critical moment of the High Celebration, with every corner of the church decorated with flowers, with the incense breathing upwards and the choir boys' marvelous voices singing hailing the Presence - in they came, the fourth part of 3,000 cotton lassies out on strike against starvation wages. The church was crowded with a fashionable congregation. There was no room for these -- strangers -- save in the empty space between the altar rails and the kneeling worshipping throng. Fasting, with all the passionate emotion of my nature at its Highest, I had been praying for a fuller realisation of the Presence, and there they stood, 750 sister women, if the "Our Father" were true, ill-clad, wet through with driving rain, hungry. It was the eleventh week of the strike, with no Trade Union pay. "They stand between me and Christ." So the thought smote me, so I see it still. Never shall any human being, so long as the world suffers wrong, know one moments real communion with the mind of the Master till they have actively thrown in their lot with the poor and the oppressed.[1]

The following is part of an editorial written by H. C. Rowe, then General Secretary of the Labour Church:

> This is a very wicked world; and the good people in it do more harm than any others . . . (The remarks of an afflicted philosopher) . . . Good men will tell you that these social problems are very intricate; there are a lot of things to be considered; life is too short; and they dislike politics. So the Devil becomes their proxy. . . . In fact, on the battle-field of life they have abandoned all the best positions to the enemy; for they have not done those things which they ought to have done.
>
> From this point of view the Preacher is usually the worst offender. It does not matter what church he belongs to, for they all regard social and industrial questions with an unanimity which is almost suspicious. I have a small collection of pulpit utterances on these matters, and it is far more depressing to read than the disconsolate sayings of our afflicted philosopher.[2]

During the Christmas season of 1907 Mr. Stewart Gray, leader of the Manchester Unemployed, spoke from the pulpit of Manchester Cathedral just after the people had sung "Christians awake, salute

---

1. Binyon, The Christian Socialist Movement in England, p. 187
2. Prophet, Oct. 1894, p. 134

the happy morn". He had climbed up, unnoticed, while the people were singing.

> I cannot understand you singing a hymn of this kind when thousands are starving in the city! I protest against the birth of the Saviour being celebrated when there are so many poor people in the world who are not helped. It is blasphemy, and in the name of God I protest.[1]

Mr. Gray was bodily carried out of the Church.

At a public meeting called "for the purpose of showing the mutual interest of Church and Labour", W. Stewart commented that

> . . . From the platform the leading men of all Church denominations were absent. From the body of the hall the members and enthusiasts of the churches were also absent. . . . The Church is not for us but very definitely and decidedly against us. This is the one outstanding fact which Mr. George Lansbury failed to recognize when he 'desired the Church to understand that if it was to be any use to the labouring man, it had, sometime or other, to take sides in the tremendous struggle between Labour and Capital'. The Church has <u>already taken its side</u> -- the same side which it has taken all through history. The Church which opposed the redemption of the chattel slave is perfectly consistent in its opposition to the redemption of the wage slave.
>
> When we come to speak of the 'forces of religion', we get on to different ground. The forces of religion may be quite outwith and independent of the Church, though that fact was certainly not emphasized at the City Hall meeting, but rather the reverse.[2]

For a less biased and more reasoned criticism we may turn to the remarks of Keir Hardie at Browning Hall on May 5, 1910:

> . . . For every Labour man who has left the Church because of antagonism to his former beliefs, ten have been driven out by the unsympathetic attitude of the Church itself. (Applause) There is not, and cannot be any antagonism between Christianity and the Labour Movement.
>
> The late Professor Bruce has put it on record that he was 'disposed to think that a great and increasing proportion of the moral worth of Society lies outside the Christian Church, separated from it not by godliness, but rather by exceptionally intense moral earnestness. Many, in fact, have left the Church in order to be Christians.' This is a strong saying, but the source from which it comes will command respect.[3]

---

1. <u>The Clarion</u>, Jan. 3, 1908.
2. <u>Ibid</u>, May 3, 1912, from a report of a meeting in Glasgow.
3. Emrys Hughes, <u>Keir Hardie's Speeches and Writings</u>, p. 140.

The insight of the Rev. P. H. Wicksteed takes us to the very core of the foregoing criticisms:

> No existing church is frankly and primarily based on the practical determination to re-organize society in the interests of under privileged producers. . . . On the contrary, the Churches accept the existing organization of Society. It is said that they 'ignore class distinctions', and the best of them endeavour to do so -- over a strictly limited area of life; but it is on the definite understanding that those distinctions are recognized in practical life, and, being universally understood and assumed, can be safely ignored officially.[1]

> What workman could walk into a middle-class congregation with the consciousness that the underlying assumption, both in the pew and the pulpit, as to the proper organization of active industrial life . . . are his own? And if he cannot do that, then in asking him to join in the worship you are not asking him to express and nourish the religious aspect of his own higher life, but to suppress or suspend that life in order that he may join in the devotions of others who cheerfully accept and would in many cases defend the things against which it is his mission to fight.[2]

Labour's protest against the Churches gave a strong impetus to the Labour Church Movement, for here was an organization designed to answer these criticisms, and to serve the interests of true religion. Let us then examine a typical congregation.

Reception Given to the Labour Church Idea:

The central function of every Labour Church congregation was the sponsoring of the regular Sunday Service with its lecture. This served a definite need: As one woman put it

> The Labour Church is a good idea. The Church people won't have us because we are Labour, and Labour people won't have us because we are religious.[3]

But this is not to suggest that it was merely an expedient -- a sort of half-way camp where people could keep one foot firmly planted in the forms to which non-conformist tradition had trained them, and

---

1. What Does the Labour Church Stand For?, p.7.
2. Herford, C. H., Philip Henry Wicksteed, p.276.
3. Reported to the author by Joseph Burgess, formerly of Stockport.

the other specifically in the path of the new reform movements. The Labour Church had a distinctive message of its own which made a direct appeal and which explains its spontaneous acceptance by a large section of the Labour Movement. It gave expression to a religious urge which was frustrated in Church and Chapel.

> I have been told that the name "church" . . . is a misnomer, that they are not religious institutions at all. But it all depends on what you mean by religion. The Labour Church folk do not bother much about God. Perhaps they are wiser and happier so.
>
> "The burthen of the mystery,
> . . . the heavy and the weary weight
> of all this unintelligible world . . ."
>
> is apt to have a paralysing effect if felt too keenly. But they do not like a militant Atheism, and they have a quiet conviction that the work they are doing is bound to prosper, because it is rooted in the spiritual nature of things, and in harmony with their upward tendency. The ordinary Christian doctrines simply have no interest, no meaning, for them. They tell you they are wholly concerned with right life and just institutions here. There is however something which exemplifies the old distinction between "faith" and "works" and the superiority of "salvation by faith" . . . The Labour Church people . . . seem to live from within; the spirit being right the conduct is spontaneously so.[1]

The Labour Churches provided a motive and a deeper meaning for socialistic economic theory by giving it a religious basis. To be active in the political or economic labour movement was to be active in God's service.[2] That people accepted the Labour Church in this light is illustrated in the testimonials reproduced below:

Mrs. Sam Brooks, looking back to her youth, (before her marriage) can still vividly recall going with her father (Mr. Cross who later became leader of the Bradford Clarion Glee Club) to her first Labour Church service.

> I can remember sitting about half way up -- on a form -- and thinking about the speech: "We've got hold of something that's right --

---

1. A. J. Waldegrave in the Labour Church Record for April 1899.
2. Cf. "Labour Church Readings" by Robt. Blatchford, Appendix, pp 657ff.

this is it!"[1]

Mrs. Senior, also looking back over a lifetime in the Labour Movement, told the present writer

> My Labour Church days were the happiest in my life. The Labour Church gave the religious outlet denied by the Church and Chapel. The Labour Party has become just a political party -- inevitably -- but regrettably to those of us who knew the first period.

Mrs. Senior than made reference to Paton of Norwich. Mr. Overton, her brother in law, agreed with her, and added

> In the Labour Church there was a feeling of responsibility, giving rise to a great deal of devoted service. I'm not so sure I should be active in the Labour Movement today if I were young again. There is not the same personal appeal and challenge.

Another who had been a member of the Labour Church said

> At the age of 18 I left the Congregational Chapel and Sunday School and believed I was entering a better religious movement.[2]

James Sims, a graduate of the Bolton Socialist Sunday School who was brought up to love and respect his Grandfather, the 'Grand Old Man' of the Labour Church and the Labour Movement generally, made the following observation:

> I attribute the present state of the Labour Movement to the loss of those ideals for which the Labour Church stood. For example: My father ran the Bolton Labour Club on a monthly income varying from four to eight pounds. At that time the Saturday socials were like church socials to which the whole family were welcome.
> -- Father was quite disgruntled when they voted to sell drink.
> -- Lately the club (no longer under my father's management) has been fined for selling after hours. Though the present Labour Party is politically strong it has lost its spiritual strength. Its ultimate salvation will rest upon a revival of those ideals for which the Labour Church stood.[3]

P. H. Wicksteed, a contemporary observer reported:

> I have seen and felt God in their midst with such power that, if

---

1. Personal interview.
2. Mrs. H. M. Mitchell, in personal interview.
3. Personal interview

we knew the like, that revival of religious life, about which we talk and hold discussions, would be in our midst.[1]

In 1907, while still a layman, William Temple described to his mother a Sunday spent in Leicester:

> . . . I then sped away to the other end of the town, to the Labour Church, where I took the chair and Mrs. Bruce Glasier (wife of the Editor of the Labour Leader) spoke very finely. Then tea with Wilford -- one of the men Mansbridge brought to Oxford in August -- and then again to the Labour Church. I had meant to repeat my Extension Lecture on Socialism and Education, but they had been getting a deal of abuse from some clergy at that end of the town, and were very keen for me to talk on 'Socialism and Christianity' so I did, and began by exhorting them to set a Christian example to the church folk who abused them by not 'reviling again'. They are not all Christians (in metaphysics) at that Labour Church, but I have seldom felt so near the real presence of pure religion. Tonight I talk to the Church Socialist League.[2]

Another contemporary testimony comes from the pen of Arthur Woolerton, writing in 1907, but looking back ten to fifteen years.

> The Labour Church was founded in October, 1891, two months previous to the first issue of the Clarion. Of John Trevor, its founder, one cannot say too much. But it may be said that he represented more than any other personality in those days, the spiritual and religious side of the Labour Movement.
>
> His championship of the 50 mat makers who came out on strike in April, 1892, and his subsequent support of some of them from his own slender means, gave one some ideal of the fervour and humanism that he imparted to the new movement.
>
> His idea of founding the Labour Church is expressed in his declared ideal of what a church should be: "A church which would further man's social aims while adding to them the devotion and inspiration of religion."
>
> This is true religion. But alas, I sometimes think now that in Manchester the Labour Church is no more that it will be impossible to acquire again the deeply religious enthusiasm that the Labour Church used to impart to the movement in its early days.
>
> I may be wrong. Perhpas the sweetness and earnestness of the Sunday meetings in the "Class" at Booth Stand in the St. James' Hall has not really been lost. It may be seen again possibly when some great crisis threatens the existence of the Labour Movement, and men are in need of that religious fervour which has over and over again snatched hope from the very brink of despair.[3]

---

1. Reported in the Labour Church Record for January, 1899.
2. Iremonger, William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, p. 332.
3. Woolerton, The Labour Movement in Manchester and Salford, pp. 5f.

The foregoing quotations have been chosen to give an impression of the enthusiastic response given to the Labour Church idea. But, undoubtedly, these were not universal reactions. E. J. Hart states unequivocally that many of the most ardent workers for the Labour Movement looked upon the Labour Church as a means of diluting and sentimentalizing the Socialist message.[1] Dr. Mellone, at that time a student in Manchester New College, London, described for the present author the student reaction to Trevor's Church:

> When I was a student . . . we heard of the "Labour Church". But as an organisation it did not seem to be making any "headway". As a matter of hearsay (for the accuracy of which I cannot vouch) some of the meetings consisted of denunciations of the rich backed up by readings from the Epistle of James in the New Testament.

John Burns, speaking at Lavender Hill, Wandsworth, on January 15, 1897,

> . . . deprecated as wrong what he termed the drifting of the Labour movement into Labour Churches. To his mind it was a waste of time and tissue, and calculated to lead to the disintegration of powerful forces. He had never yet spoken in a Labour Church, and he did not intend to do so.[2]

There were, of course, numerous criticisms from the pulpits and assemblies of all denominations. Typical of them, though more complete and reasoned, is the statement of Dr. George Barratt in his presidential address to the Congregational Union of England and Wales. The address was later published in two sections under the titles The Secularisation of the Pulpit and The Secularisation of the Church.[3] A criticism (of Trevor) by Canon Scott Holland is quoted in the Appendix.[4]

---

1. Cf. Wm. Gallacher's comments, Appendix, p. 730
2. Report quoted by the Prophet, Feb. 1897, p. 18.
3. Relevant exerpts are reprinted in the Prophet, Nov. 1894, pp. 152f.
4. Appendix, pp. 604ff.

The significance of these criticisms is not so much the evaluation of what the Labour Churches stood for and what they denied, as the fact that there was a sufficient challenge to the more orthodox bodies as to elicit this notice and criticism.

The Religious Emphasis:

As Labour congregations developed it became clear to those who understood the spiritual basis, and therefore had the largest concept of what the Labour Churches could and should be, that the average lecturer did not have an adequate grasp of the religious nature of the Socialist gospel. This was true from the very beginnings. A few clergymen tried to fill the gap. In 1892 the Rev. B. J. Harker made Duke's Alley Congregational Church of Bolton into a Labour Church so far as its constitution would allow. Throughout the years the Rev. J. C. Kenworthy of Carlisle gave himself unstintingly as a Labour Church lecturer, and later as minister of a kindred body, the Brotherhood Church. The Rev. Conrad Noel of the Church of England, was a popular Labour Church preacher through several decades. Dr. Hall, a Unitarian minister in Norwich during the early years of the twentieth century, used to plan his own Sunday School work so he could leave early and arrive at the Labour Church in time to address the afternoon meeting. Mr. D. B. Foster, a forward looking Methodist Lay Preacher with a liberal theology, assumed the presidency of the Labour Church Union with the intention of developing there a deeper religious insight (but gave up after a year's trial). Later the Rev. J. H. Belcher, Congregationalist turned Universalist, tried something of the same project with better success.

Many other lecturers had a 'spiritual' message, but the majority were more concerned with electioneering and with political problems.

Trevor reported to the American Forum in January, 1895:

> For the most part our speakers are politicians first and foremost. What we are now waiting for is the development of a few prophets, in whose hearts God lives and moves, and on whose lips the living fire has been placed.

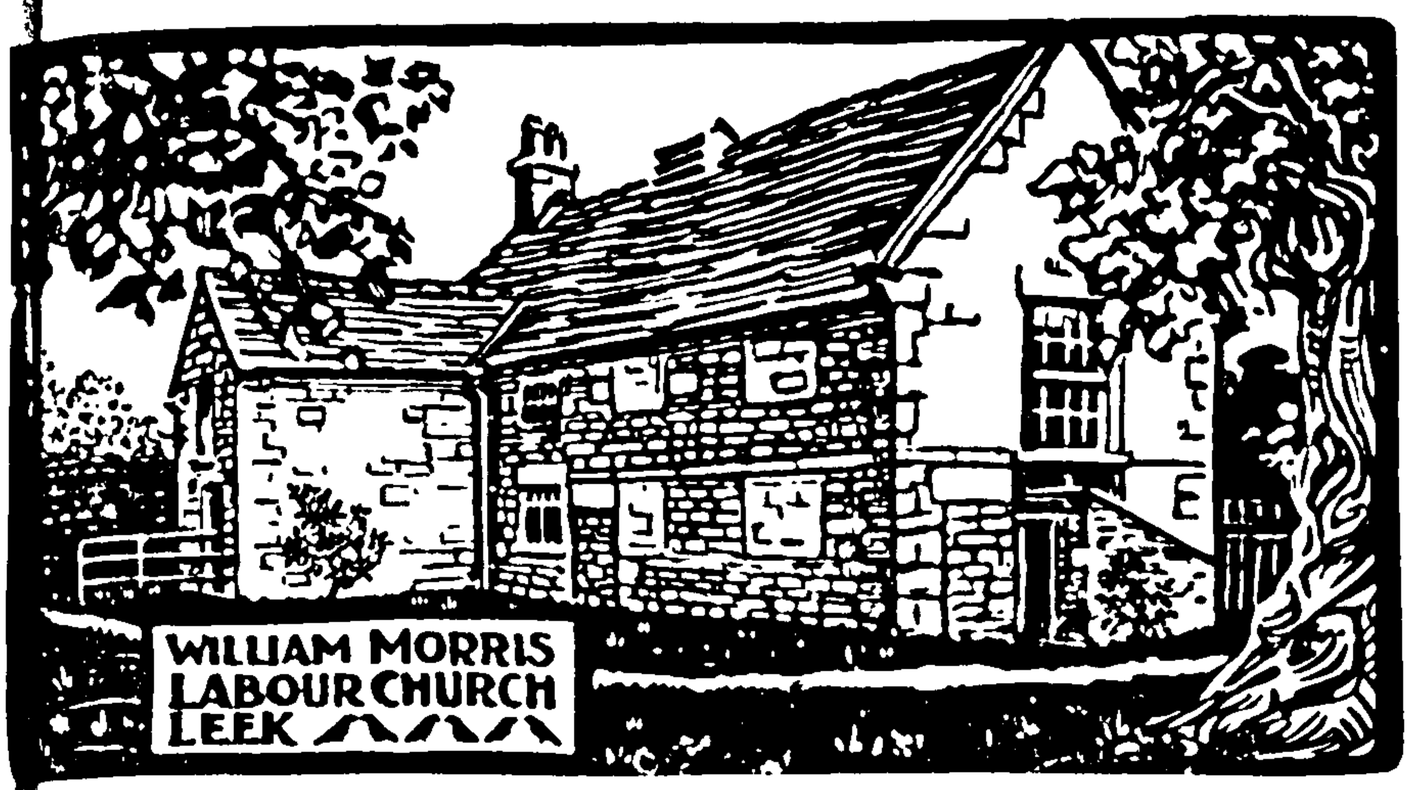
Without such 'Prophets' the Labour Churches might easily become mere adjuncts to the political movement.

Trevor early realized that the Labour Churches stood between two real dangers -- on the one side absorption into the political parties, and on the other, absorption into the historical churches. Either of these would have meant the abandonment of the central idea which had given birth to the new congregations.[1] In later years, when the congregations had ceased to exist, it became clear that they had fallen prey to both these tendencies. In the face of the adoption of a more humanitarian and, dare we say, a more collectivist approach, on behalf of the churches, and of a recession from the extremist and doctrinaire forms of economic socialism (which gained headway in other parts of the world) on the side of Labour, people could find sustenance for their religious life within Church or Chapel, and could find expression for it in the Labour Party, without fear of being outcasts from either their religious or political fellowships. Perhaps it would be more accurate to suggest that the congregations did not fall prey to the dangers foreseen by Trevor so much as they evaporated when the ideas which had given them birth were accepted by both Church and Labour. But we are here anticipating.

Perhaps the best way to gain an appreciation of what an early Labour Church service was like, and to understand its appeal, is to

---

1. Cf. Presidential Address to the L. C. U. Conference, Prophet, July, 1898, p. 195.



SOME idea is given above of the exterior of the "William Morris Labour Church" at Leek, as seen from its own grounds, shaded by ancient park-like trees. It is a quiet bit of English domestic architecture, of simple but delightful character, mellowed by a couple of centuries. It is the old meeting house of the "Friends"; and Margaret Lucas—with many another good Quaker and true—lies buried there.

Internally it has a quaint old gallery, and good old high-back pews—none of the vulgar modern Bethel pitch-pine benches. The seats and other woodwork are painted apple-green, with blue felt mats, and the walls are stencilled on a rich red lacquer ground with designs by Walter Crane and Larner Sugden. The speaker's desk has a richly embroidered silk book-cloth, designed by George Rigby and Donald Larner, and executed by a member of the Leek Embroidery Society: it bears in 'Kelmscott" lettering the church's name. The church's banner stands adjacent, beautifully painted on blue silk velvet by Stephen Webb (a founder of the Arts and Crafts Society, and associated with Morris at South Kensington). It bears the church's monogram, and the legend, "Every Heart contains Perfection's Germ" (Shelley).

The "Book of the Opening" of the church has many contributions, among others from Bruce Glasier, the late Grant Allen, Ed. Carpenter, Walter Crane, Sir W. B. Richmond and the Duchess of Sutherland. Copies may be had from Treasurer, post free 3d.; or large paper, 7d.

The church was opened in Dec., 1896, and appears to be the only memorial of the late William Morris yet offered in which he would have personally rejoiced. It has a "Cinderella," which provides simple feasts and entertainments for the poorest children of the town, winter and summer, in times of trade depression. It has also a Labour Church "Camp," which every summer goes under canvas, or into lodgings in the neighbouring hill villages, and is very "conducive" of health and good spirits for tired town-workers. The choir, under the assiduous conductorship of J. B. Doxey, has become a great help and attraction to the church.

attempt a reconstruction which will try to show the general order of worship, the ideas expressed, and the enthusiastic reception these services received.

The Sunday Service:

The important event of the week which attracted members and visitors to the place of meeting to hear the speakers, who were often national or international leaders of the Labour Movement, wasthe Labour Church service.

Let us imagine that we have been living in an industrial town in the north of England, and that we have seen a handbill announcing that Tom Mann would be the speaker at a service of the Labour Church to be held in the Paladium Music Hall. We have made our way, along with fifteen hundred others to the largest auditorium in town. We suppress an uneasy feeling about going to the music hall on a Sunday evening; we find places where we can see what is going on. The orchestra is tuning up, and a 'church service' will soon begin, the first we have attended for quite some time. While we are waiting our apprehension is partially dispelled by the familiar strains of an old French Minuet, followed by a rousing march by Gounod.[1]

---

1. The Labour Prophet of June 1893, p. 50, announced that the Bradford Labour Church had acquired the services of a small orchestral band. "They played three pieces - one while the people were assembling, another during the collection, and a third while the people were departing. The music consisted of a March by Gounod, the grand old "Largo" by Handel and a quaint old Minuet, Sylvana. . . . The mention of this leads me [Trevor] to ask, Is there any cogent reason why really good dance music should not occasionally be performed at a Labour Church Service?" The suggestion was taken up by several congregations who organized orchestras and bands to play at the Sunday services and to lead Labour Church Parades.

Before the service proper begins, let us look around us. The other people present are of all classes, but the greater number seem to be workers. Over on our right is a group of four women, probably 'smallway weavers'[1]. Just beyond them is a family group -- father and mother are each nursing a small child. But of the audience we can observe, most are men, decently dressed artisans or mechanics, some of a higher grade, but all of respectable and responsible types[2]. Everybody seems to be caught up in a feeling of earnest expectancy; there seems to be purposiveness in the air. It is not piety; but, yes! it is a sense of worship![3]

A small group of men and women are making their way to the stage -- they are quiet and reserved; there is nothing dramatic or bombastic about them. They take their seats at a small table placed a

---

1. Mrs. Sarah Dickinson, an early member of the Manchester and Salford Labour Church was a "Smallway Weaver" from 6:30 in the morning to 6:00 in the evening. After a hurried tea she would be away to one or another of the numerous Labour Church meetings.
2. "At the meetings in Manchester there must have been at least a thousand men present. Every variety of type was represented, the shrewd stunted weaver, the powerful labourer, square and set with heavy toil, dapper intelligent men who might be clerks and shopmen, men with strong earnest faces -- one whom I knew to be a popular journalist -- quiet depressed men, and men with discontented burning eyes. Steady attention, riveted on the speaker, was common to all alike, and the one expression I failed to note was that of sarcastic mockery, which so often characterises the keen-witted democrat in any sort of religious assemblage. Each man seemed, as it were, to be off his guard, and to have given his allegiance. Applause and laughter had their way freely, and every telling point was caught up. They were leaning foreward in the seats below, hanging over the rails in the galleries, heads resting upon hands, brows knitted, eyes anxiously strained. Close to me one night, sat a mean, ill grown worker with sad eyes, to which at certain words of the preacher he furtively lifted his worn hand again and again, to clear away the tears." -- Miss Evelyn March-Phillips in The Spectator, April 21, 1894.
3. Wicksteed wrote in the Manchester Guardian: ". . . I was struck at once with the purposeful air with which the six or seven hundred members of my congregation gathered. . ." The letter in which this sentence appears is quoted in the appendix pp.433f.

little to one side of the platform. Behind them the gaudy background has been rather effectively hidden by three large banners. "God Is Our King" is the motto on the one at the center and rather high upoon the backdrop. It is a strangely comforting thought in the midst of our country's troubles. And then to the left and lower down "God And Liberty." We've heard that phrase somewhere and it is a pleasant thought -- Liberty! Would that we had it! To the right is the third motto: "Thy Kingdom Come On Earth." It is beautifully embroidered; and it does seem very familiar -- yes! it is a phrase from the Lord's Prayer -- it is a strange motto for a church that does not claim to be Christian. But our musings are interrupted. The tall grey-haired man with the big beard has risen to his feet.

The service is to begin with a hymn; number one in the Labour Church Hymn Book. Look, here is a prefatory note about it:

> Sung by 150,000 people at a Mass Meeting of Political Unions, at Birmingham, in connection with the agitation which preceded the passing of the First Reform Bill, 1832. See Miss Martineau's "History of the Peace."

The tune is familiar too: "Freedom" is its name. The people know it, and love to sing it. It is as if the words expressed the longing of their hearts.

Lo! here we answer! see, we come
  Quickly at Freedom's holy call.
We come! we come! we come! we come!
  To do the glorious work of all;
And Hark! we raise from sea to sea
The sacred watchword, Liberty!

God is our guide! from field, from wave,
  From plough, from anvil, and from loom
We come, our country's rights to save
  And speak a tyrant faction's doom.
And Hark! we raise from sea to sea
The sacred watchword, Liberty!

God is our guide! no swords we draw,
We kindle not war's battle fires;
By union, justice, reason, law,
We claim the birthright of our sires.
We raise the watchword, Liberty!
We will, we will, we will be free![1]

The lady on the right is now standing by the table; she has a book in her hand. What will the lesson be? Will it be from the New Testament? No! its from Words of a Believer by Lamennais. It's not a familiar title; but, let us listen:

> Understand clearly how you may make yourselves free.
>
> To be free, you must, before all things, love God; for if you love God you will do His will, and the will of God is Justice and Love, without which there can be no Freedom.
>
> When, by force or fraud, a man takes what is another's; when he attacks his person; when, in what is perfectly lawful, he hinders him from acting as he wishes; when he violates his rights in any way whatever - what is it? It is injustice. It is Injustice, then, which destroys Freedom.
>
> If each of us loved only himself, and thought only of himself without seeking to help others, the poor would often be compelled

---

1. Miss Evelyn March-Phillips reported that this hymn was "given with really good effect". She described the meetings of the Labour Church in Manchester in some detail:
> There is nothing intrinsically impressive about a large music hall with tawdry, disreputable decorations. It was a strange place enough in which to find oneself on a Sunday evening in Manchester. . . . By half-past seven o'clock the hall was packed, from the shabby gold and crimson boxes to the gallery, packed with a respectable, responsible-looking audience, not to be confounded with one of the Salvation Army type. . . . On the stage was a brass band and a few quiet looking men and women, the gawdy background was concealed by giant banners, . . . The readings were short and stirring, or interesting, pieces from Walt Whitman, Emerson, or Lamennais, and were listened to with deep attention. Now and again a solo was sung, the Lord's Prayer was repeated reverently by a large proportion of the congregation, and then followed the address, -- the feature of the eevening. - Spectator, April 21, 1894.

It is interesting to note that it was this letter which claimed that Trevor had been a Congregationalist. Trevor was raised a Baptist.

to steal what is another's in order that they and their family might live; the weak would be oppressed by a stronger, and he by one stronger still; and Injustice would reign everywhere. It is Love, then, which maintains Freedom.

Love God more than all things else, and your neighbour as yourself and servitude will disappear from the earth.

And yet those who profit by the servitude of their brothers will use every device to maintain it. For this purpose they will use both falsehood and force.

They will declare that the arbitrary rule of some and the submission of all the rest is the order established by God. To maintain their tyranny they will not fear to blaspheme Providence.

Answer them that their God is Satan, the enemy of the human race; and that yours is He who has conquered Satan.

After that they will let loose their satellites upon you; they will have prisons built without number to <u>sut</u> you up therein; they will pursue you with fire and sword; they will torment you, and will pour forth your blood like a stream of water.

If, then, you are not resolved to fight without ceasing, to bear everything without flinching, never to grow weary, never to give in, keep your fetters and give up the freedom of which you are not worthy.

Freedom is like the Kingdom of God. It suffers violence and the violent take it by force.

But the violence which will put you in possession of Freedom is not the fierce violence of robbers and brigands; it is not injustice, revenge, cruelty; but strong, unbending will, a courage calm and generous.

The most sacred cause is changed into an impious and execrable one when crime is used to maintain it. The man of crime may rise from slavery to tyranny, but never to Freedom.[1]

The very handsome man at the left has come to the very front of the platform, and the orchestra is giving him an introduction. His voice is clear and strong as he sings "The Song that Reached My Heart"[2]

---

1. Lamennais, <u>Words Of A Believer</u>, translated by John Trevor. This is one of a selection of Labour Church Readings proposed for publication, but not published apart from their appearance from time to time in <u>The Labour Prophet</u>. See Appendix, pp. 61ff.
2. Mr. Joseph Freeman sang this solo at the first meeting of the Labour Church. Cf. <u>Manchester City News</u>, Oct. 10, 1891, p. 7.

The applause that follows the solo threatens for a moment to break the atmosphere that has been built up, but we immediately sense the spontaneity and the genuineness of the appreciation, and the feeling that "its like a concert" disappears; we lean forward that we may not miss anything that may be said.

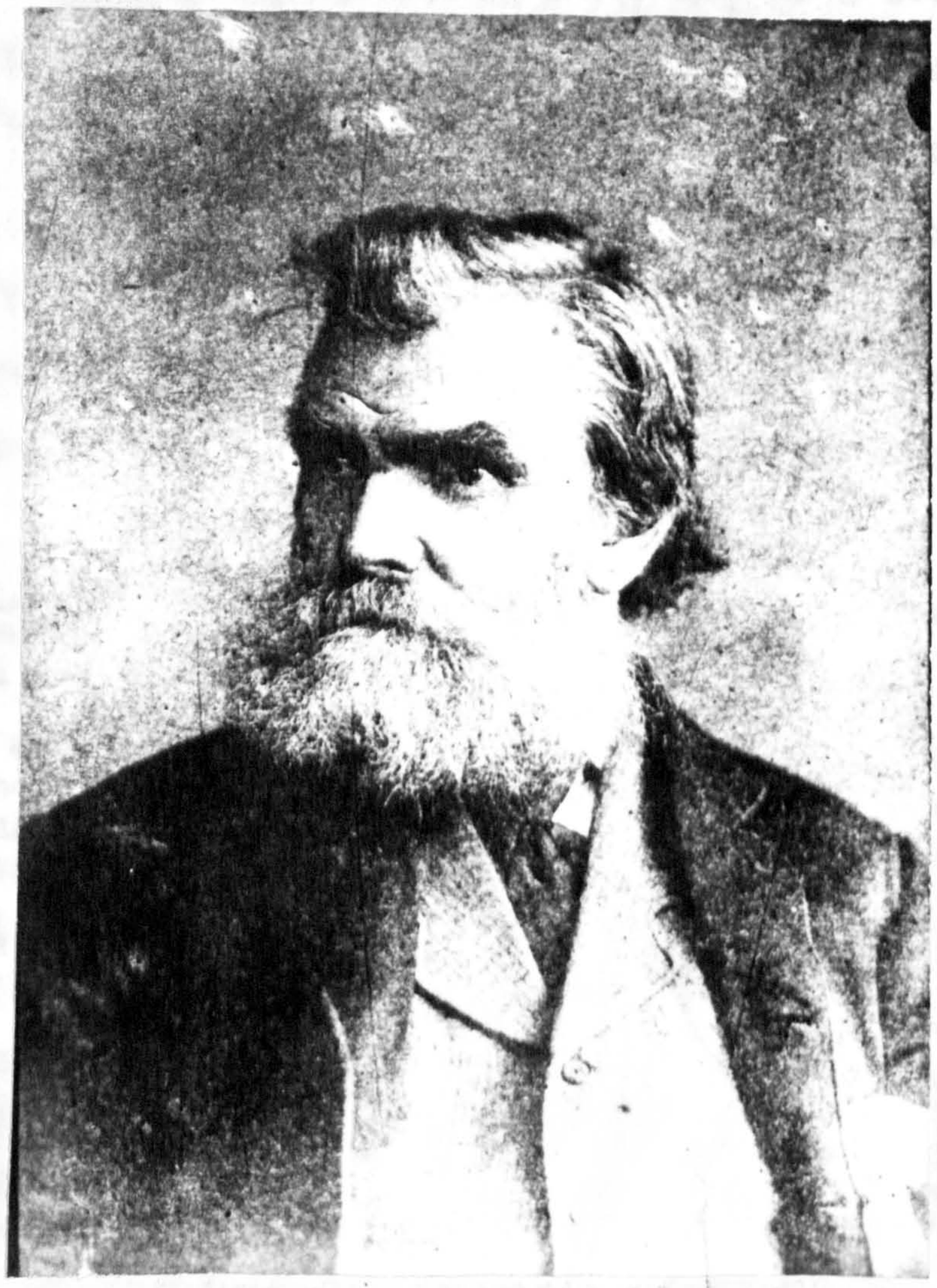
The grey-bearded man asks us to join with him in prayer. With fervent feeling and yet with dignity he speaks to the Almighty about the life, work and character of the people assembled. Somehow we are caught up in his expression of hope and confidence and thanksgiving, and join with him in repeating the Lord's Prayer. After the 'Amen' we are horrified to find ourselves clapping -- but, we are soon reassured for we are not the only ones who have forgotten conventional propriety. A subdued applause rings throughout the auditorium, and somehow it is not in the least irreverent.[1]

The orchestra is now playing the prelude to a hymn. Again the tune is rather familiar, and the words thrill us through and through. They come from the pen of John Macleay Peacock:

Sons of Labour, keep ye moving
  Onward in the march of mind,
Every step your path improving,
  Leaving olden tracks behind.
Every soul-enslaving fetter,

---

1. In April, 1893, a Labour Church congregation wrote Trevor asking him to send copies of a number of his prayers. He declined, saying that he never wrote his prayers, and suggesting that prayers read from a book often lacked reality and vitality. "It is an intensely real thing to me, and being real to me it is a reality to the audience, save of course in the case of those who do not believe in it. This I take to be indicated by the subdued applause which has always followed the prayer in our special gatherings, when the audience is unusually large, and a considerable portion of those present have not suppressed their feelings in accordance with conventional proprieties." -- Prophet, May 1893 p. 39.



James Sims of Bolton

Burst and break and cast away,
That the world may be the better,
For your needs some other day.[1]

The big grey-bearded chairman now looses some of his serious air, but not the least bit of his dignity; he unbends as it were, and becomes a bit jolly. Tom Mann, he tells us, is a socialist of some years standing. He was one of the heroes of the London Dockers' Strike in 1889 and, since that time, has worked consistently for the unionizing of unskilled labour. From the early days of the Labour Church he has been one of the favourite lecturers, for he has understood the principles of the church, and he is still one of the ablest contributors to the development of the 'Religion of the Labour Movement'.

Amid wild applause Tom Mann rises. He waits for order to be restored, and then he begins:[2]

> In a complex society like ours, a very large share of one's time, thought, and energy must be devoted to the mere work of obtaining a living. It is in this respect that religious guidance is needed. But what guidance is given? The virtues -- including honesty, sobriety, and obedience to superiors -- are all emphasized in the Sunday Schools, Bible classes, and churches; exactly how to apply them being, of course, too great a task.
>
> We then ask, 'Where does this average teaching of the church and chapel lead?' Judging by a lengthened experience, I unhesitatingly declare that I find the average church or chapel goer becomes a narrow, saving, squeezing creature, taking little or no part in the vigorous life of the community, but very

---

1. Hymn No. 8 in the Labour Church Hymn Book, first edition. Mr. James Sims, grandson of the one-time president of the Labour Church Union, reports that this was one of the favourite hymns of the Bolton Labour Church.
2. Tom Mann was a favourite Labour Church lecturer. The 'sermon' which follows is largely given in his own words, and is taken from A Socialists View of Religion and the Churches. Whether or not this was ever used as a Labour Church sermon is not known, but it is typical of what such sermons were like. Cf. Appendix pp. 529-595

commonly becoming, by his isolated action, a source of weakness in any real democratic movement. He attributes the cause of poverty to the utter degradation of the poor caused by their dissolute habits. In actual fact the Church is in a helpless backwash having lost the true courage, mental and moral vigour, power of disernment, and hence capacity, to apply what humanity now demands. A truly religious body of men whose religion enabled them to understand between right-doing and wrong-doing, and which furnished them with the requisite courage to face all foes, would never be content with the sunny complacency of the average parson in the midst of the life-destroying conditions of our industrial centres.

What are the ministers and plutocratic members of the rich churches and chapels doing to make earth like heaven? Why, it would need an entire change in the basis of society, and the means whereby incomes are obtained. Who among the orthodox in faith and practice objects to ten or more per cent usury? Honesty! Righteousness! Who that believes in the doctrines of Jesus can uphold an industrial system whose very basis from top to bottom is 'ten per cent'? "The man that will not work, neither shall he eat," is an apostolic injunction; but how many ministers or members of our swell churches and chapels believe it?

I do not state or imply that church clergy and members are hypocritical; what I do say is "that the truth is not in them." Christians need to be "born again." Orthodox religion is acquiescing in an irreligious condition of Society. Christianity is made part and parcel of the national commercialism, and wholly subservient to the individualistic acquisitiveness of the age. Church or chapel is attended merely to maintain tradition and keep up appearances.

It does appear to be the case that with industrial England, as with pastoral Israel in the time of Amos, the outward ritual is made the chief concern. At that time the Mosaic ritual was jealously attended to, but the message was: "I hate, I despise your feast-days . . . But let justice run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." (Amos 5: 21-24). This is a sweeping condemnation of fashionable church-going whilst the state of Society is unsound. But nothing puts the case more clearly than the condemnation by Jesus of the orthodox professors of religion of His time "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." (Matt. 13:14). These Pharisees have their exact counterpart to-day in England.

Orthodoxy (it will be noted that I continually guard myself by referring to "Orthodoxy") talks about the one thing needful for salvation as belief in Jesus as the Saviour. I make no comment on the doctrinal point. What I want to expose is the demoralising effect produced by the individual being taught that salvation for him consists in reflecting upon and believing in his acceptance with God, because of Christ's sacrifice, irrespec-

tive of the life he leads. "No one says this," some will cry. Yes; but, indeed, it is said and taught in nineteen churches out of twenty, and the effect is to cause the individual to think of himself or herself and to value, out of all proper proportion, his or her own personal salvation. Selfishness begins that and with selfishness it usually ends. A million times over is the same story told - personal salvation by faith in Christ. It seems to me it would be a truly religious act if all parsons and street corner preachers received a severe castigation for wasting so much time trying to assuage the sorrows primarily brought about by a vicious industrial system, instead of boldly tackling that industrial system itself.

Salvation surely consists in living in accordance with Divine harmony - in loving order and living it, - in hating disorder here on earth and striving might and main to remove it that earth may be more like heaven. Oh, the unworthiness of followers of Jesus being primarily concerned about their poor little souls! He that seeks to save his soul on these lines will lose it; but he that will lose his own life by working for the salvation of the community - all such must be saved. Up! off your knees young men! Don't go continually begging of God to do that which you ought to do! This world is wrong, and you and I must right it.

A little less time at orthodox mission meetings and a little more time spent in helping on effective industrial organization, to insure right-doing in the business of life, is sadly needed just now. This orthodox mission work is exactly what our exploiting plutocrats rejoice in. It is so gracious of them to give an occasional ten pounds to keep a mission going, that they may with reasonable safety exploit an additional twenty from their employees, and still receive the praise and blessing of the faithful.

I am not condemning religion, but the lack of it. Religion to me consists of those ethical principles that serve as a guide in all matters of conduct - social, political, and industrial alike; and the essence of the whole thing is this: the choice between a life whose actuating motive shall be self, and a life which shall have primary regard for the well-being of the community as a whole. To do this is to engage in making it possible for "His Kingdom to obtain on earth as in heaven".

If I am asked "Do you think that all that is necessary is a perfected industrial machinery on Socialistic lines?" I say emphatically "No!" I do distinctly believe in the necessity for Socialism, but I know that something more than good machinery is necessary. -- I desire to see every person fired with a holy enthusiasm to put a stop to wrong-doing. This requires personal discipline. The baser sides of our nature must be beaten down that the higher and nobler side may develop. Regard for the brethren (brethren meaning all) must be the mainspring of our action. We must become the servants of all. As Jesus was the servant of mankind, so I, as a follower of Jesus, must learn to be of use.

But timid Christians and their preachers are likely to reply that 'to bring about such changes as you suggest is impossible; human nature won't admit of it'. If not, what becomes of the Lord's Prayer: 'Thy Kingdom come . . . as in heaven so upon the earth'? If this is a pious fraud, please be frank enough to say so. Some of us, when we say the Lord's Prayer, do indeed mean it, amongst whom I am glad to be one. We believe that the Lord's Prayer is not only realisable, but we are of those disciples who will make it so. This done, the question of a "Living wage" will be settled.

To engage in the work of raising each individuul to the highest possible level of development is to be occupied in the noblest work the earth affords. This is the aim of Labour men. But, it is not enough to mean well - we must be able to do well - and to do well we must know the laws which underlie and govern the forces with which we have to deal. And then we must work to eliminate the stains of child labour, sweated workers and legalized robbery that spoil our national and our Christian character.

> I appeal to you to live your faith. Take a determined stand! Compel our nation to eliminate the evil that is destroying our very national soul and join with us in solving the 'Social Problem of the Future' which John Stuart Mill in his "Autobiography" says is to " . . .unite the greatest individual liberty of action with a common ownership in the raw material of the globe, and an equal participation for all in the benefits of combined labour."

The thunderous applause surpasses anything this hall has heard for many a day and it continues long past the usual duration. It seems to shout that this our leader and hero has expressed the feelings of our hearts even better than we knew them. Tom Mann keeps to his seat, showing neither embarrassment nor pride at the reception he is receiving. The chairman stands and the applause dies away. There is a commotion at the back - a few are leaving their seats and heading for the exits; but most, - like ourselves, wait, spell bound. A collection, to be used, not for the funds of the Labour Church, but for the funds of the striking Broomsgrove Nailers' Union is to be taken. The men have been out twelve weeks, when they were at work they could not earn more than a pound a week. One man, working from six in the morning till nine at night, seven days a week, earns only fifteen shillings, and of that he had to

spend two shillings for tools and firing. He sold his nails for seven pence a thousand and the company demanded eleven hundred and fifty nails per thousand. That man is the father of seven children. Is it any wonder that these men are demanding a fifty percent increase in wages.[1] We delve into our pockets and find a precious three penny bit. It was to have purchased a treat for the children, but they can wait. Would that we could spare more for the need is great.

The orchestra is now playing a haunting theme. It's not familiar; it sounds a bit classical. It's pleasant to listen to anyway.

The chairman has now risen to make a few intimations: The service next week will be held in the Church at 27 Back Street. We must note that carefully for we want to learn more of this new church.[2]

The last hymn is to be <u>The Red Flag</u>. We're not quite so sure we want to attend next week if this is really to be a revolutionary party meeting - The Red Flag indeed! What number did he say it was -

---

1. The Labour Church service, held in the Free Trade Hall on Sunday, January 24th, was a grand success, thanks chiefly to the name and fame of Tom Mann, who addressed us on "The Future of Trade Unionism." . . . We had an audience of some 4000 persons, a large number having to stand. . . . Tom was in fine form, and went at it splendidly for just an hour, holding his audience completely all the time. . . . For the third time we made an appeal for the Broomsgrove Nailers. We are told we missed a good deal of money through the exodus of one-quarter of the audience as soon as the address was finished. . . . However we collected £12/3/9 for the nailers. . . . The one drawback was the absence of women, as usual. <u>Prophet</u>, Feb. 1892, p. 16.
2. Miss Evelyn March-Phillips reports in the letter referred to above: "To many of these men who have let years pass without a thought of religion, the teaching of the Labour Church comes like a revelation. The founder has received letters which in this way are both curious and touching, and has been strongly urged to form Bible-classes and to hold prayer-meetings by men who have long cut themselves adrift from all established forms of worship.

No. 133.

The people's f/ag is deepest red;
It shrouded oft' our martyred dead,
And ere their limbs grew stiff or cold,
Their hearts' blood dyed its ev'ry fold.

It waved above our infant might,
When all ahead seemed dark as night;
It witnessed many a deed and vow;-
We must not change its colour now.

It well recalls the triumphs past;
It gives the hope of peace at last:
The banner bright, the symbol plain
Of human right and human gain.

It suits to-day the weak and base,
Whose minds are fixed pelf and place,
To cringe before the rich man's frown
And haul the sacred emblem down.

With heads uncovered swear we all
To bear it onward till we fall.
Come dungeon dark or gallows grim,
This song shall be our parting hymn.

Then raise the scarlet standard high!
Within its shade we'll live or die;
Tho' cowards flinch and traitors sneer,
We'll keep the red flag flying here.[1]

That's not as bloodthirsty and as revolutionary as I had thought it was - rather a fine sentiment. Yes! we shall be meeting again at the Labour Church next week.[2] But, just a minute - there's to be a Benediction

"May the strength and joy of God's presence be with all who love their brethren in sincerity. Amen."[3]

---

1. Labour Church Hymn Book 1906
2. An excellent description of a Labour Church service was given by Phillip Wicksteed after he was guest preacher to the Manchester congregation in Jan. 1892. See Appendix pp 433f.
3. Benediction often used by John Trevor - Prophet June 1895, p. 89 .

The Life and Work of the Labour Churches: Social Activities:

Though the Sunday lecture was the most widely known activity of the Labour Churches, it was not the only one of importance. The surviving records suggest that their role as centers of social activity was equally important.

G. D. H. Cole notes the importance of fellowship for those who espoused the new ideas: The leaders of the New Unionism and the movement for political independence,

> . . . mostly young and eager, did not need to be detached from Liberalism, to which they had never owed allegiance. But many of them did badly need a sense of fellowship and of adventure in a new way of living that was much more than an acceptance of the call to work together for merely economic ends or even for economic and political ends.[1]

Pronounced Socialists, of course, had a deep sense of fellowship with other workers for their particular theory. Some of the men, and in a few instances women too, had their Labour and Socialist Clubs where they could go for an hour or two or for an evening of congenial company. But Clubs tended toward an attitude of exclusiveness and political groups to a doctrinaire rigidity. There was needed a more inclusive group which should gather together Socialists of every degree and variety, both men and women, in a close fellowship devoid of differentiation of clique or doctrine. This was one service performed by the Labour Churches for the early Labour Movement, later to be joined by Clarion Fellowships and numerous Socialist Societies.

Most Labour Churches had monthly socials as an integral part of their work. These usually took the form of a dance, whist drive,

---

1. Cole, Socialist Thought, Vol. 3, Pt. 1, p. 136.

Good-night! Good-night!
The chimes ring loud and clear,
Good-night! Good-night!
A new-born day is near.
Our mirth has rung, we've danced and sung,
Cu Our eyes have gleamed delight;
The day has passed, we part at last.
To each and all, good-night!

Sleep! gentle sleep!
Thy robe o'er nature lies!
Sleep! gentle sleep!
Steal softly on our eyes.
And not alone to us be known
Thy blessings calm and deep;
To pain and care be free as air,
And soothe them, gentle sleep.

Good-night! Good-night!
The chimes give warning clear
Good-night! Good-night!
A new-born day is near.
Our mirth has rung, we've danced and sung,
Our eyes have gleamed delight;
The day has passed, we part at last.
To each and all, good-night!

-- Charles MacKay
L.C. Hymn Book No. 89
("for Social Evenings")

concert, or sometimes all three combined together in one grand evening; with, of course, tea and cakes for refreshment. The main purpose to be served was the introduction of members to one another, and their collective enjoyment of engaging in a common activity. A secondary motive was financial, though sometimes the Social Committees did not show profit, and even had, on occasion, to be subsidized from the general treasury. But, generally speaking, socials did lighten the financial burden of maintaining church facilities.

It is significant that the socials are remembered by those who took part in them particularly for their atmosphere of good wholesome fun. The undesirable elements associated with public dances were mostly kept out by restricting attendance to members and specially invited guests, with the result that, though the attendances might reach several hundreds, a newcomer would not long remain a stranger; cliques were rare, and disorderly conduct practically unheard of. The minutes of the Bradford Labour Church show that for a short period they were having difficulties with their socials. The steps taken to prevent a recurrence indicate the seriousness with which they regarded the whole question. The Committee arranged that at least one of their number should be present in an official capacity at each dance, with authority to stop the orchestra playing if discipline got out of hand. Attendance was more carefully restricted to Labour Church members, and a set of rules was drawn up to cover future eventualities. The minutes, however, record not an instance in which these measures had to be invoked.

Hyde congregation reported an interesting point of view regarding Dance Socials:

STOCKPORT LABOUR FELLOWSHIP

Annual Carnival Dance and Joy Night.

'XMAS EVE, December 24th, 1923,

IN THE

CENTRAL HALL, HILLGATE.

Revels start 7-30 p.m. until 12 p.m.

Music by HOPWOOD'S SYNCOPATED ORCHESTRA
(With special Jazz effects).

M.C.'s - - - - - - - A. PEARSON and T. LEAH.

Hundreds of Novelties and Balloons Free.

Tickets (limited number) - - - - **1s. 3d.**

A SELECT DANCE EVERY SATURDAY - - - 9d.

> Public dances have been run for several years, and are very successful and properly conducted. But it is imperative to have a committee for their management composed of Labour Church members who set character and reputation of the movement before any source of income, and who can quietly insist upon those who attend conducting themselves properly or refuse to admit them again. Thus we get young people to help us with their money, and to come into association with the church and with Socialists (for we make as many friends as possible among them) and draw them away from other places in the town where the surroundings are of a far different character. . . . No alcoholic beverages were served. [1]

An interesting feature of the Labour Church socials is that they were often attended by the whole family; grannies and children as well as young folk had a wonderful time. Young people in their twenties dominated, for it was this group more than any other who were enthused by socialist ideas, and it was at these socials that many young couples met and began to walk the road leading to matrimony.[2]

It is not an exaggeration to suggest that in many places the Labour Church was representative of the whole Socialist community. Socialists as such did not feel particularly welcome in the established places of community fellowship. They were 'homeless' because of their beliefs, and largely because of this fact, though with varying shades of political complexion and often with conflicting economic theories, they found themselves within a common fellowship. The distinctions of puritan and libertarian typified by the views of Hardie and Blatchford were almost indistinguishable in the early days; all had common ground in their distrust of Victorian respectability. R. B. Cunninghame Graham's 'sermon' on China Dogs appealed

---

1. Labour Church Record, Oct. 1899.
2. Mrs. Brooks, Mrs. Mitchel, and Mrs. Senior (Cf. Appendix pp. 705ff 699f & 709ff) are good examples.

to and was remembered by I. L. P. and S. D. F. members alike. Describing such ornamental items as symbolic of hypocritical middle-class 'respectability', he ended with his punch line: "To Hell with China Dogs!"[1] But despite this revolt against 'respectability' Labour Church members (including ardent I. L. Peers and just as ardent Clarionettes, as the two groups came to be distinguished in later years) were decent and respectable folk, whose sincerity was often more marked because they weren't Chapel-goers. Mrs. Dickinson, nee Sarah Welsh, remembers attending as a little girl St. John's Church where the Rev. John --- and his wife used to provide soup for a penny. The impression she had of their greedily snatching the penny and refusing even a kindly smile to the poor made a sharp

---

1. This is the conclusion as remembered by Sarah Dickinson. In the printed version which appeared in the Labour Prophet for May, 1892, pp. 33f., it ended with the injunction: "Damn all China Dogs!" The following are quotations from the published account.
   ". . . Let but a china dog, with his patches of yellow on his back, his google eyes, and chain round his neck strong enough to restrain an elephant, but once appear upon a mechanic's chimney piece, and ten to one but he is a lost (political) man. . . . What do I mean, do you say, with all this prate of china dogs? Well, this. There is a tendency in England towards respectability. A man who is respectable is generally a man lost. To be respectable does not imply a moral change in a man. Respectability only attacks a man from the teeth outward. He may still cheat, and drink, and lie, and cringe, but, if he outwardly become respectable, the man is saved in this world. Of the next, if there be one, I do not speak.
   A man, we will say, has been a Socialist on a pound a week. Suddenly his wages rise to thirty shillings or two pounds. What happens? Well, too often a change comes over the spirit of his life, and he turns "mugwump". Socialism is too vulgar and too commonplace for his converting. . . . Then the black coat appears and all that it implies. . . . The working man puts on airs and apes the ways of the small tradesman, and the tradesman of the wholesale man . . .
   Thus every class plays unwittingly into the hands of the sweater, who pockets the pelf, and laughs at all . . .
   Progress in the future will be -- must be -- in the mass, and not, as heretofore, by the unit. . . .
   Then can man, looking on his china dog, his hideous stovepipe hat, his knighthood, or whatever is a golden calf to him, value them for themselves, and not, as now, for the barrier they put

between

contrast to the atmosphere she found in Trevor's Labour Church. Here she felt she belonged.

Chapel-going working people looked with mild mistrust upon the Socialists. Mrs. Thursby told me that she married a Socialist before she was fully converted to socialist thinking. She remembers how, at first, she was not attracted to her husband's friends because they were not 'respectable' -- they actually played games on Sunday![1] But after she got to know them she learned to respect their sincerity and their lack of cant. The working class people of non-conformist tradition were largely Liberal, Chapel-sympathizing if not Chapel-going, and definitely non-socialist. They were the backbone of the Old Unionism. Converts to Socialism had all to make a break with Victorian mores, (though not always a sharply defined one), and were looked upon as 'unrespectable'.[2] Though snubbed, many Labour Church members, as a matter of principle, retained their Chapel connections and even Chapel attendance.[3]

---

betwixt him and his fellows. Till that time be come, I say devoutly, "Damn all China Dogs!"

1. Alderman E. J. Hart, socialist, of Manchester, proposed over a period of years beginning in 1906, that bowles be allowed in the public parks on Sunday afternoons. In a municipal election of 1908 he was opposed and defeated by a candidate (Dr. Fletcher) who ran on a Christian Morality platform. A year later this 'champion of Christian Morality' ran away with another man's wife. This was the sort of thing that convinced Socialists that their honest and above-board rejection of 'convention' was really more respectable than much Chapel-going 'respectability'.
2. John Paton, in his Proletarian Pilgrimage, in referring to his part in the Clarion Fellowship of Aberdeen during the early years of the 20th century, (cf. pp. 112ff.) speaks of the ". . . violent reaction from the sham and humbug of the contemporary conventions". Though he is not describing a Labour Church, his references to a ". . . perpetual state of simmering revolt" are relevant, for this same reaction was typical of Labour Churches.
3. Mr. Overton was approached at Chapel one morning by a friend who spoke in a confidential tone, suggesting scandal: "Do you know your son goes to the Labour Church after Sunday School!" to which came a jaunty reply: "Yes! I see him there!" -- from personal interview with Mr. Overton, the son.

In the early days the mere fact of being in revolt against 'respectability' brought all, from secularists and agnostics to Whitmanites and anti-vivisectionists into fellowship with the Socialists. All were part of a general movement of 'non-conformity' of social proportions. Religiously it was non-conformity with the conventions of the non-conformist Chapels; politically it was a non-conformity with the ways of the Liberal party; personally it was a refusal to accept the dictates of 'Mrs. Grundy'; and in a social context it was an insistance on trying something new. In later years, as the revolt grew to greater proportions, it became more clearly defined, and divisions became more pronounced. Theosophists and advocates of vegetarian cures separated themselves from socialism, and within socialism itself the puritan and libertarian trends became quite distinct. In the late nineties Clarion Clubs which previously had been fostered by Labour congregations became in a sense friendly rivals, though still in close fellowship. It became an understood agreement that the Churches with their more puritan tendencies should take the lead during the winter season, and that as the weather became finer, the Clarion Cycling and Rambling Clubs should take prominence. While it must not be forgotten that Cycling Clubs often conducted Labour Church services, operated Socialist Sunday Schools, and distributed, as part of its propaganda literature Labour Church Tracts, and while it must be remembered that the Clarion was one rallying point for Labour congregations during the first decade of the twentieth century, it is true that Clarion activities diverted attention of members away from the Church. Still, it was in the Labour Churches that Clarionettes and I. L. Peers found common ground.

Besides the monthly socials, many congregations ran weekly Sunday afternoon teas enabling those who had come from a distance to stay at the church between the afternoon and evening services. Time and opportunity were thus afforded for growing friendships, for discussion and for debate. It also required a service which drew the women into active participation in Labour Church and socialist causes. Mrs. Senior writes that in Bradford

> The work entailed was done by the young women members of the social committee. Twenty of them took their turns in being on duty once a month. This often proved a valuable way of getting them interested in the work of the church. They also served at Saturday night dances which were held each week.[1]

The Labour Churches did much to provide fellowship for and to enlist the aid of women in the socialist cause. Before the Labour congregations had been in existence long, the secretaries began to comment upon the unusual presence of women, wives, mothers, daughters and sweethearts, who had hitherto taken no part in the Labour Movement. For them there were soon organized Women's Guilds, sewing classes, and Women's Committees.[2] One congregation even organized a Women's Independent Labour Party[3] (a sort of Socialist Women's Missionary Society) for the study and assistance of socialism, and

---

1. Correspondence with Mrs. Senior. Cf. Appendix, p. 710
2. A report in the Labour Prophet (Sept. 1894, pp. 126f.) indicates: Four congregations, Bradford, Manchester, Bolton, and Hyde, had no separate women's organization, but did have active help from women workers. Three congregations, Plymouth, Morley, and Hull had no women workers. Other congregations reported various women' activities, along with comments similar to the following: " . . . the women who attend our church are rather too far advanced in their views as tothe relationships of the sexes to fall in with the "Mothers' Meeting" kind of palaver which prevails in orthodox churches; they would rather do their share with the men." While this attitude did characterize the Labour Churches generally throughout their existence, by 1897 separate Women's organizations were much more prevalent than they had been.
3. Cf. Labour Church Directory, Appendix, p. 330

for participation in propagandist activity. In most congregations the women undertook sick visitation, relief of extreme poverty,[1] and the raising of funds by the many ingenious plans used by women's groups generally. There was a close parallel between this aspect of Labour Church activity and that of the more orthodox congregations of the land.

In the summer the Labour Church program often took the form of a country ramble, picnic, or cycle tour. These, judging by the photographs sent me by old Labour Church members, were highlights in the experiences of the members. The whole family would go rambling, even though the smaller children had to be carried most of the time. In later years at least once annually this ramble would take the greater proportions of an organized visit to more distant parts. In these larger projects, usually visits to socialist groups in England, France, or Germany, the I. L. P. and the Clarion Fellowships co-operated with the congregations in organization and finance.

A discussion of the social activities of the Labour Churches would not be complete without mention of their dramatic clubs, dancing classes, musical and cultural education groups, etc. Plays (comedy, farce, and drama) were staged and presented, often with finesse and polish. For instance the repertoire of the Hyde Labour Church Dramatic Club, "The Clarion Players", included:

---

1. In some congregations, (in 1894 only Manchester, Leeds, and Bolton, though in later years the system became more general) teams of visitors were organized that no ill person would be overlooked. Some congregations combined with this a 'helping hand fund' administered with the advice of the visitors. This proved most useful. Most congregations probably followed the path indicated by the Birmingham secretary in 1894, when he wrote: ". . . the friendship among members has kept us in touch with absentees." -- Prophet, Sept. 1894, pp. 126f.

Shakespeare: Two Gentlemen of Verona
As You Like It
The Tempest
The Merchant of Venice
The Merry Wives of Windsor
G. B. Shaw: Major Barbara
Augustus Does His Best
O'Flaherty V. C.
How He Lied To Her Husband
Blanco Posnet
Man of Destiny
and countless other one-act plays by various authors.

With <u>The Tempest</u> they won first place (a banner presented by Mrs. Grendon of Manchester) at a Shakespearian Tercentenary Festival in 1924. The adjudicator was Mr. Ryder Boys, the famous actor of Manchester and London.[1]

The dancing classes did not produce such publically praised results, but the continued demand for them showed that they were satisfying a need of their membership. The orchestras and choirs played their part in enabling ordinary working class people to express themselves musically, for apart from the Labour Church instruction classes they would have received little or no training. Home reading unions and reading circles were formed to enable the members to appreciate good literature. Art classes, illustrated talks, trips around art galleries, and lectures in science were frequently arranged. The whole cultural development of an otherwise ill-oportunitied people was considered part of the work of the congregation.

Of course no congregation had organized all the above mentioned activities at any one time, but each undertood as large a program as opportunity and leadership permitted. Even where classes could

---

1. Information from Mrs. H. Armitage of Hyde.

not be organized, cultural subjects were dealt with by lecturers. Perhaps it would be Miss McMillan delivering her series on "Art and the Working Man", or elocutionist Fred Hartley reciting one or more of the literary classics, or Dennis Hird discoursing on Evolutionary Science, but whoever was the lecturer, the working people attended in good numbers, anxious to improve their education. In Stockport and Hyde (two churches that have enjoyed exceptionally long life) cultural education and activity assumed an important place, an importance perhaps greater than in other congregations, thus explaining in part their vitality on into the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century.

Finance:

Labour Congregations had one problem in common with all non-conformist groups -- but had it more severely than they. Because of the lack of wealthy contributors and the poverty of the general membership, money difficulties were always present. The financial stability of the congregation depended upon the 'liberality' of people who had very little to be liberal with. Collections brought in many farthings, and halfpennies, with occasional bright silver coins to emphasize the predominance of the darker copper colours. So rare were larger donations that when a member accidentally placed a two shilling piece, thinking it was a penny, in the collection, there was no hesitation in returning the coin to its rightful owner.[1]

The Sunday collections indicated a generous response on the part of the congregation,[2] but left a sizeable deficit to be made

---

1. Cf. Directory of Labour Churches, appendix p.370
2. 1896 average 10/- per hundred attenders. Prophet April 1896, p. 5

up by monthly subscriptions pledged by members, and by rentals for the use of the church facilities by other groups. Musical concerts, dramatic events, sales of work, and socials (if there were any proceeds from the latter) helped to reduce the deficit that was a constant characteristic of most congregations. One wonders if they pioneered the 'deficit budget' which has become such a popular political tradition.

Labour Church deficits were not always due to the heavy costs of hall rentals, travel expenses, and fees of the best speakers available; there was a continual pressure to expand the propaganda work to the very limit of the resources. The criterion for each expenditure seemed to be the opportunity it affords to extend the work rather than the resulting solvency or lack of solvency of the treasury.[1] If any work needed doing, the congregations operated on the faith that later, if not sooner, the needed finances would be forthcoming; therefore the work should be done soon sooner rather than later. As the congregations grew older and more experienced, and as the deficits grew more burdensome, the trend was to a much more conservative financial policy.

The Government of the Congregation:

It must be emphasized that decisions concerning financial

---

1. "We need money. In Manchester we are in great need of it. But when men and women are anxious to serve God and Humanity, money or no money, they need never stand idle for want of a job. Our whole movement is a rough Pioneer Movement, and Pioneer Movements will always be short of cash -- for two reasons: Few men of means like Pioneer MOvements, and men of pioneer stamp will always go straight ahead, ever a little in advance of the supplies that come to them." -- Trevor, Prophet, April 1892, P. 27.

policy, indeed all decisions, were the concern of the whole membership, and not merely of a steering committee. There was, of course, an executive committee, and as many special committees as thought expedient for the work in hand; but all policy decisions were subject to the monthly member's meetings.

Towards the end of the 19th century the secretaries began to complain that these were poorly attended; some congregations began holding them on Sundays with a slight improvement; Birmingham tried for a time holding quarterly meetings, with no improvement. In all congregations the executive committee was compelled to take more and more responsibility for policy decisions. The original congregational democracy, with its wide diffusion of authority worked well for only a few years; it soon fell prey to general apathy and indifference; congregations were forced to adopt a form of representative government through elected committees with legislative powers.

Generally speaking, committees were large; in some instances one in five sat on the General Committee. Add to these the members of the various special committees who were not already on the General Committee and the proportion of members exercising authority and responsibility was much greater than 20%. At the same time that the move was away from congregational responsibility to the representative function of committees, the move was toward smaller committees. But even in the later periods of the Labour Churches there was a distinct distrust of anything that savoured of rule by a clique or by a single person.

In September 1894 it was reported, as the result of a survey,

that:

> The entire absence of a parson, or one-man rule in any shape, is a distinct feature in Labour Church local government. The membership meeting is the source of authority, and while it is usual to have an executive committee, that is not always the case.

The role of 'parson' was greatly feared and disliked. When Trevor saw what the absence of a resident pastor was meaning in the life and work of the Labour congregations and suggested to the 1899 Labour Church Union Conference that some such expedient, while not yet practical, might be a future possibility, he was vigorously opposed. It was claimed that a church with a pastor would inevitably tend toward a congregation with one-man rule, or, what would even be worse, a parson whose 'free' pulpit was tied by the purse-strings of a few wealthy supporters. Diffusion of all authority among the widest number of members possible was a cherished ideal not given up easily.

This "Congregational" policy coupled with Trevor's fear of the confining influence of "institutionalism" which was shared by many early Labour Church members, meant that the new congregations did not become self-perpetuating groups in the same manner that sectarian movements have a habit of doing. They were much more concerned with the job to be done than with the perfecting of an organization. This is not to suggest that tendencies toward institutionalization were not present, they were, but they were not strong enough to overcome the dominant characteristic. Labour Churches at least approximated John Trevor's ideal.[2]

---

1. Prophet, Sept. '94, pp. 126 f.
2. Cf. the section on the "Disappearing Service", p. 295

While the strongest and most fully organized Labour congregations were quite independent of political affiliations, and encouraged their members to be active in the political party of their own choice, there was a natural affinity for the I. L. P., with the right wing of the S. D. F. running a close second. Often there was confusion between the I. L. P. and the Labour Church due largely to the number of members who were active in both. In a few occasions Labour Congregations had to remind the party that the church was both older than and independent of the I. L. P.[1] This was particularly true after 1905 when the Labour Churches began to take a much more leftish Socialist line, with strong S. D. F., (B. S. P.) and secularist tendencies, and the I. L. P. began to draw close to the Lib-Lab policy of the L. R. C.; but one can see this situation developing very early in their history.

In 1894 four congregations, Bolton, Bradshaw, Farnworth, and Morley were sponsored, housed, and given executive leadership by the I. L. P., though the members' meeting, and not the party, was the final authority. One congregation, Plymouth, was an offshoot of, and had the same management as, the local gasworkers union.[2] This seemingly anomaly of indistinct lines of demarcation between Party, Union, and Church was hardly noticeable in the early days because the members of these bodies were in large measure the same people.[3] It was a natural thing that the president of the

---

1. Cf. Appendix p.338
2. Prophet, Sept. '94, p. 127
3. There was even an overlap of membership between S. D. F. and I. L. P. Mr. Overton, in reference to Bradford, mentions that S. D. F. people were also members of the I. L. P. Their first loyalty was to the first named organization. Their purpose in the latter was to 'permeate' it with more orthodox socialist economic ideas. Fabians, whose avowed purpose was 'permeation' made it a definite point to be members of several socialist bodies.

local I. L. P. branch should also be chairman of the Labour Church. It is interesting to note that even where the Labour congregation was organized independently of the party, there was usually a sufficient number of executive members of one on the executive of the other that decisions relating to the church could be made by the party and vice versa[1].

As differences of opinion among the members of the Labour Congregations became apparent in the early years of the twentieth century and the church organization began to lose its unity and harmony even though the Sunday lectures remained popular and well attended, many congregations dissolved as such, and left their activities to be administered by the party, as happened in Bolton.

Educational, Political and Philanthropic Activities

No characterization of a Labour Church would be complete without mention of the educational, political and philanthropic activities of the congregations, for these were the ways in which the religious sentiment found its expression; these were religious activities, the ways of serving Humanity.

The Manchester and Salford congregation early set the pattern which was followed by the others. As soon as the congregation was organized there were established a series of monthly study groups: one concerned itself with the Labour Church principles, another with the possibilities of independent political action, a third with ways of helping the "depressed masses". Out of these groups came the "Missionary Class", the Manchester Independent Labour Party, the Labour Church adoption of the Cinderella program and

---

1. Cf. Appendix pp. 371 f.

the organization and support of the Manchester Mat Makers Union and Co-operative Factory. For those who desired a better understanding of economics and politics, J. S. MacKenzie, M.A. of Owens College, began a course in Political Economy. For those who wished to be more active in propaganda work, Trevor gave instruction in elocution and public speaking, and a few months later Miss Kate Dodd of Owen College conducted a special class for the women.

Each Labour congregation carried on a similar program. Often co-operating with the Local Fabian society and other similar groups they would arrange a University Extension Lecturer for a winter series[1], or would persuade a local person who had special gifts or qualifications to undertake leadership. If no 'qualified' leadership were available, one of their number would prepare a paper based upon a number of 'text books' and read it, after which the whole group would discuss the subject matter for the mutual edification of all. If nothing else, this at least stimulated the members to read in order to keep abreast of their fellow students; and for some it meant practice in expressing themselves on paper and in argument. The most frequent study classes formed were in the realm of Political Economy, public speaking, modern science, and 'Reading'. (The group would select a book such as Ruskin's Unto This Last or Blatchford's Merrie England - at each session part of the book would be read aloud, and then the subject matter would be discussed by the group.)

---

1. Eg. In 1896 Bradford arranged two courses of six lectures each, with the University Extension Service. Subjects were: "Mediaeval England" and "Industrial and Economic Questions since 1789".

The motive of the Labour Churches in providing these courses of adult study was two fold. There was the desire to provide the means of developing a full mental life that members and adherents might make the highest and best use of their lives; and closely related to it was the desire to provide the means by which members might qualify themselves for better service to their fellow men. Courses in political economy and public speaking were designed to prepare the average working man to become an able exponent of the new 'Gospel' of Socialism. If the 'Emancipation of Labour' depended upon the spread of socialistic ideas, then each socialist must be trained to understand and express the new faith.

The Labour Church program provided not only opportunity for educational advancement, but ways of putting new found skills and knowledge to use. During the good weather numerous 'open air' propaganda meetings were held. One of the better speakers supported by two or three members would mount a 'soap box' and begin to speak; the others would gather round. As curious strangers stopped to listen, the members would keep moving back, allowing the public to occupy the better positions. When the crowd assembled was large enough that those on the fringes could not hear, the Church members would begin discussions with interested spectators. The younger members and older boys would be busy mingling with the crowd and selling Labour Prophets, Socialist Pamphlets, and other Labour literature.

There were always many jobs in connection with political campaigns (both National and Local): hand bills were to be distributed, collecting and canvassing to be done, committee meetings to be attended, along with a great variety of more specialized tasks

such as practising a band or conducting a street meeting. Very often, particularly during the 90s, it was by Labour Church initiation that Socialists agreed to work together to sponsor, and if possible elect, one of their number to the School Board, the Board of Guardians or the local council. Labour Church facilities were often used as campaign headquarters and sometimes official church endorsation was given.

When no political campaign was in progress there was often an industrial situation in which the Church could give aid to exploited workers[1] or could assist the unorganized general workers who would suffer as a result of a strike amongst the skilled trades. The cause of the unemployed was another area where the Labour Churches were able to serve, through right-to-work committees, through granting premises and facilities to Unions of Unemployed ~~Unions~~, and through efforts at organizing protest meetings.[2]

For those whose interests ran to philanthropic service rather than political campaigning there were the Cinderella Clubs[3], the Socialist Sunday Schools[4], the sick visiting[5], the administration of material relief in times of illness and unemployment,[6] and the collecting of assistance for strike and disaster funds[7]. There were groups who undertook the study of particular problems, such as housing conditions in the slums[8], infant mortality rates[9],

---

1. Cf. Leeds congregation Appendix p. 416.
2. Cf. statement of James Lilley, appendix pp 713f
3. Cf. Appendix pp. 340ff. and infra p. 133.
4. Cf. Appendix pp. 400f
5. Cf. Appendix pp. 415 and 428 and 431.
6. Cf. Appendix pp. 336 and 416 and 435.
7. Cf. Appendix pp. 407 and 439.
8. Cf. Appendix p. 420
9. Cf. Appendix p. 724

Hand to hand, how far we reach, Each for all, and all for each;
Thus we play, and thus we teach—Hearts and hands together.

SOCIALIST SUNDAY SCHOOL

Hyde

Wish you many happy returns of this your birthday

Name Hetty Layland Date August 16th 1914 Supt Mo Bowley

industrial hazzards such as lead poisoning in the potteries[1], and the campaigning for the Peace Crusade.[2] No member of a Labour Church ever need have remained idle for want of an important job to do, a job which he could consider to be his specific task in co-operation with God at the 'growing point' of the Evolutionary Process.

---

1. Cf. Appendix pp. 353 and 402
2. Cf. Appendix p. 354

One holy Church of God appears
Through every age and race,
Unwasted by the lapse of years,
Unchanged by changing place.

From the oldest time on farthest shore
Beneath the pine or palm,
One unseen presence she adores
With silence or with psalm.

Her priests are all God's faithful sons,
To serve the world raised up;
The pure in heart her baptised ones,
Love her communion cup.

The truth is her prophetic gift,
The soul her sacred page;
And feet on mercy's errands swift
Do make her pilgrimage.

O living Church! thine errand speed,
Fulfil thy task sublime;
With Bread of life earth's hunger feed,
Redeem the evil time.

-- Samuel Longfellow

L.C. Hymn Book No. 83.

CHAPTER IV

NATIONAL EXPRESSION OF THE IDEA

There were several attempts at national organization of the Labour Churches or their activities, but these enjoyed but partial and temporary fulfillment. The earliest, and perhaps the most successful, was the Cinderella program.

Cinderella:

The Labour Churches adopted "Cinderella" as their program. This did not mean that every Cinderella club became Labour Church -- far from it; but most Labour Congregations supported Cinderella clubs, and where the program had not been organized locally, they initiated it. In some communities, as in Chester and Liverpool, this was the only part of the Church program that had any permanence.

"Nunquam" tells the story of the founding of the Cinderella clubs in such a charming manner that it would be a distinct loss to tell it in any words but his own.[1] It is hoped that the shortened version here given retains its whimsical flavour:

> I write this for the children, . . . It was one of the big children who asked me to write it, a big boy named Trevor, who plays at being editor of this paper. And this big boy said I was to tell the little boys and girls how Nunquam "started the Cinderella Clubs".
>
> I wish big boys wouldn't be so sure about things. But big boys are like that.
>
> How does John Trevor know that Nunquam started the Cinderella Clubs?
>
> I am Nunquam, and I don't know that Nunquam started the Cinderella Clubs; at least I am not sure.
>
> But I will tell you about it and you will see.

---

1. Prophet, June '93, pp. 53ff.

"Nunquam"

Robert Blatchford

If I were as cock-sure about things as other big boys are, I should say that the Cinderella Clubs were started by -- Who do you think? -- By Cinderella! Yes, my dears, by Cinderella herself.

Mind; I don't mean the Cinderella of the story book, who got to be a princess because she had small feet. No; I mean a real Cinderella, a Manchester Cinderella; a poor little girl, who had neither small feet, nor a fairy godmother, and so had to sell matches in the street.

And the worst of it is, I don't know that little girl's name. . . .

Well it was just before Christmas in 1888, and just outside the Exchange Station a little girl came and asked me to buy a box of matches.

And I had bought two boxes of matches already, and you know, even a big boy with a lot of money, cannot buy matches from every child. There are so many poor children in the streets, you see. . . . I said, "No, thank you" to the little match girl.

But she would not go.

She ran along-side of me, and said something like this:

"Oh, sir, please, sir, buy a box, sir. Only got three left, sir. Just one, sir."

I said, "No thank you, my dear." and walked on.

And the little girl ran on beside me, and kept talking.

"I'm going to a party tonight, sir. You might buy a box, sir."

When she said that, I looked at her very carefully. She was about eight years old, had reddish hair, and blue eyes, and was clean, but not very tidy.

But she had such an honest little face; and she looked so glad and so good-humoured, that I stopped and asked her where she was going to the party.

It was at a Catholic school. It was threepence to go in. She had got nearly "all" the money, and then she said:

"Please, sir, buy a box. I've never been to a party before."

I said. "Oh!" and give her a shilling or a sixpence, I forget which, and she said, "Oh, thank you." and ran away as hard as she could run.

I hope she enjoyed her party. I never saw her again.

. . . . . .

So of course you all think I went straight home, and founded a Cinderella Club.

But I did nothing of the kind.

. . . . . .

. . .

It was months after that, in the spring, when I was going all through the poor streets of Manchester, so that I might write about them, and get the rich people to build the poor people good houses to live in, that I began to notice the little children, in Hulme and in Ancoats, dancing round the piano-organs, or playing in the gutters.

And one day I saw a little baby girl nursing a doll. The little girl sat on a doorstep in a very narrow and very dirty street, and her doll was made of a clothes-peg tied up in a duster.

I am fond of children; and I have some children of my own. I knew how fond my little girl was of a doll. . . . I thought I should like to take a cart-load of dolls around Ancoats and give them to the little children of the poor.

But I still never thought of the Cinderella Clubs.

. . . . . .

Well, some months later, about October, 1889, I got a letter from a gentleman who thought that the children of the poor ought to be sent to night-schools to learn about science and religion.

. . . I felt vexed because I knew that when I was a child I hated science, and would rather have been whipped than asked to learn the catechism; and I knew also that the poor children I had seen had a great deal of work to do, and very little time or chance to play.

And at last I got up and wrote a long answer to the gentleman's letter, and printed it in the Sunday Chronicle, and in that letter I said the children wanted dolls, and toys, and skipping ropes, and flowers, and fields; and that if someone would form a club to amuse the children I should be glad to help. . . .

But still I did not think of Cinderella Clubs.

. . . . . .

Nor for another week or two. And then a lady wrote to me from Liverpool, and said, "You say it would be a good thing to have a child's club, where children could dance and play, and have dolls and fairy tales; but <u>why don't you start one</u>?"

And <u>then</u> I thought of the Cinderella Clubs.

. . . . . .

. . . I asked for help in the paper, and we had a meeting, and we opened the first Cinderella Club.

We started this club to amuse ~~the~~ please the children. We did not want to teach them anything; but we knew we could not amuse them whilst they were hungry, and so we made it a rule to feed them first and amuse them afterwards.

We got a lot of help. . . . Lots of people who did not like Nunquam liked Cinderella, and we soon saw that our club was sure to turn out well. . . . One of the best friends Cinderella had was Mr. Henry Whiley, of the Health Department: He found her a home, and to him she owed much. . . .

We got such a lot of help. There were singers, and players, and conjurors, and ventriloquists, and Punch and Judy shows, and dancers, and niggers, and magic-lanterns, and all kinds of things.

You can guess how kind the people were to poor little Cinderella when I tell you that music-hall singers and actors and actresses, who charged ever so many pounds a night for singing at the halls and theatres, came and sang to our children for nothing. . . .

We had a Christmas tree, too, and dolls, and toys, and sweets, and oranges, and one day I thought we would give dolls and other things as prizes to the cleanest children; not to the best dressed but to the cleanest.

Up to that time poor little Cinderella had not been very careful about being clean. But the week after the prizes were offered there was such a change that we almost believed there had been fairy godmothers about, with soap instead of pumpkins, and combs and towels instead of lizzards and mice. . . .

But it was not all fun and pleasure at the Cinderella Club. No. Many of the little children were so poor, so ragged, so thin, and so pale, that it made our hearts ache to look at them. I have seen big fat jolly men who called to see the club, turn away with tears in their eyes, and I don't think many women came there who did not have to use their handkerchiefs before they went away.

You don't know how it hurts us big boys and girls to see you little boys and girls unhappy. As for me, it makes me very

angry, as well as very sad, and then I say such nasty things, and people don't like me at all. . . .

Our first club did so well that many new ones were started. There was one in Hull, one in Bradford, one in Ashton, one in Stallybridge, one in Birmingham, one in Salford, and one in Halifax, and most of these are still doing well.

In the second year the Cinderella Clubs of the North of England fed and amused more than fifteen thousand children.

. . . I can tell you it does me good, when I see little children hungry and sad, to whisper to myself that one word "Cinderella".

And the little match girl by the Exchange Station, and the baby with the duster doll in Ancoats, if they knew how many good suppers, and warm clothes, and sound boots, and pretty playthings, and nice books, and happy evenings had come to all those little brothers and sisters of theirs, because they had suffered and pined for childish pleasures, don't you think <u>they</u> would be happy, too?

. . . . . .

. . . I want to ask you <u>little</u> boys and girls the question which John Trevor told me to answer:

Who started the Cinderella Clubs? Was it Nunquam, or the little match girl, or the baby with the clothes-peg doll, or the Liverpool lady?

Or was it Someone else who made men and women love children?

I know that Nunquam got the credit, and that he did not want it, and did not deserve it. I know that the question of who started Cinderella Clubs cannot be answered, and that it does not matter; and I know -- which does matter, and is quite plain to see -- that Cinderella is a great blessing, and God Bless her!

. . . . . .

In the autumn of 1892, as the Manchester and Salford Congregation was commencing its second year of work, there was expressed the desire that the Labour Church Institute should be of service to those living in the immediate neighbourhood, out of which came the proposal to form a Cinderella Club along the lines initiated by Robert Blatchford. At the first meeting about sixty children were fed and entertained. The policy was to bring the children from a dif-

ferent neighbourhood each night with the result that over eight hundred children from the Deansgate district were served and, where necessary, given good used clothing. At the conclusion of the first winter's work Cinderella had served 3,164 meals.

While a policy of 'no teaching' was followed, the children did learn to sing Labour Church hymns, and were invited to a special Children's Service at the Labour Church on April 9th, when John Trevor gave an address on "Cinderella".

In the meantime other of the newly organized Labour Churches began to sponsor Cinderella Clubs where these were not already organized. In May 1893 Trevor added the "Cinderella Supplement" as a permanent feature of the Labour Prophet, thus adopting Cinderella work as a definite aspect of the Labour Church program, apparently with Robert Blatchford's full approval and co-operation. Of it Trevor wrote:

> Our most promising child is Cinderella. I believe she will grow up a beauty. One of our members, in a flighty mood, suggested her adoption, and she was adopted, and we are going on adopting her. Cinderella has been fed and clothed and entertained, and now she has been taken to church. Next she is to go to school -- a Cinderella School -- where she will be taught our principles.[1]

A committee composed of Robt. Blatchford, John Trevor, Fred Brocklehurst, H. A. Atkinson, Fred Barrett, Walter Cooke, Miss Bell, Mrs. Williams, and a few other Cinderella workers[2] met to consider the resolution:

---

1. Prophet, May '93, p. 41
2. Among the Cinderella workers were Mrs. Trevor, Mrs. Cox, Mrs. Farrow, Mrs. Powell, Mrs. H. C. D. Scott, and the Misses Robinsons.

> We propose to establish a Cinderella Sunday School; not to force into the children Labour Church ideas, but, by means of interesting lessons in various subjects, to develop their thinking and imaginative faculties, so that they may grow up to be, what they were intended to be, men and women who will be able, to some extent, to take an intelligent interest in things which go on every day around them, and when the difficult problems of life confront them, of which they have no idea at present, they may be able to grapple with them, and thus mitigate some of the evils which are at present dwarfing and stunting their lives. Our idea of the school, therefore, is that it should be a place where the children can be trained to think, and not merely to become Socialists or Labour Church members.[1]

Methods of implementing the resolution, rather than any debate as to its purpose, was the subject of discussion. It was generally agreed that children from eight to fourteen would be taught in small mixed classes, and that lessons should also be given to the large open sessions, that teachers should be carefully selected and given assistance and training, and that the curriculum should include a wide variety of subjects.

As a stimulus to Cinderella Sunday Schools, the Labour Prophet sponsored a competition. The competitors were asked "If you were shut up with ten Cinderella ragamuffins (boys or girls or both, about twelve years old) on a Sunday morning, for the space of half an hour, and you had to teach them something, what would you teach them, and how would you go to work?" The winner (from Hull) suggested a series on Brave Deeds, coupled with practical Ambulance instruction possibly leading to the St. John's badge. His treatment of the subject would indicate that he was no stranger to the problems of teaching "Cinderella."

Katherine St. John Conway (though she declined to enter the com-

---

1. Prophet, May 1893, p. 43

petition) sent in some suggestions. In the midst of some good practical advice she wrote:

> Let each teacher fasten his own dozen or score on to him or her, win their love, and let them look in during the week, share walks and talks, go sliding, blackberrying, trespassing together -- escape from Manchester <u>is</u> possible to sturdy folk -- and then theology will die a natural death, and life take its place.[1]

Miss Eleanor Keeling's "Outline Addresses for Children" give some idea of the kind of teaching given in the Cinderella Schools.

Union Is Strength

I Bees - One bee gathers a little honey. Many gather much, and store it. As winter approaches the workers kill the drones. Will not support those who do no work. <u>All Workers share</u> honey.

II <u>Ants</u> - One Ant finds ear of wheat. Many ants help him to carry it. All share the spoil.

III Laden fruit tree (apples). Two boys. Neither can reach. One climbs on other's back. Gathers apples. <u>Equal share</u>.

Free Gifts

I Ships sailing on sea. No one stops it. Sea free.

II Men fishing on sea. May have all they catch.

III Flowers growing in the sun. Sunshine and rain are free to all.

IV Birds flying in air. Air free to all.

V Children walking in the fields. <u>Trespassing</u>! Ground <u>not free</u> to all.

VI Shells, etc. out of the sea may be had for the getting.

VII Coal, salt, etc. out of land should be similarly free to all.

Competition

I Cattle grazing. Enough for all. Each takes what it wants and leaves the rest for others.

II Pigs feeding. Enough for all. But greedy pigs take more than their share. Others must, therefore, go short.

III Plenty of food in the world for everybody. Some have too much, others too little.

Enough -- no more!

I Bird wants to build nest. Where may he go? Any tree not

---

1. <u>Prophet</u>, July '93, P. 68

being used by other birds.
II Sparrow builds nest. Cuckoo turns him out. Might not right.
III Spider spins web anywhere he likes. Takes what room he needs, and no more.
IV Lion lives in a cave. Leaves other caves for other animals.
V Man wants to build a house. Cannot because no land. Other men take more than they can use. Not fair. [1]

Imperceptibly Cinderella Sunday Schools for ragamuffins of the slums and the Sunday Schools organized for children of Labour Church members lost their separate identities, and from approximately September 1894, were dealt with as one and the same.

Cinderella Conferences:

On the 13th of May, 1893, the Labour Church called a Cinderella Conference, to meet in the Labour Church Institute, in Manchester, at which Nunquam (Robert Blatchford) presided. Nine delegates came from Preston, Stalybridge, Manchester & Salford, Oldham, Hollingworth & Failsworth. In addition letters of apology were received from Birmingham, Ashton-under-Lyne, Hull, Bradford, and York. Fred Brocklehurst, General Secretary of the Labour Church, who had been instrumental in calling the conference, was elected secretary.

Discussions were most helpful, but delegates did not feel they could commit themselves to a national program without consulting their clubs, so the conference was adjourned to meet at Preston in September. The further development of a national movement of Cinderella work took its own direction -- and was not part of the Labour Church Union; but local local Cinderella groups were defin-

---

1. Prophet, Oct. 1894, p. 139, titles p. 141.

itely associated with Labour congregations in a number of towns, and Cinderella work was discussed at a number of Labour Church Union Conferences. When the Labour Brotherhood was formed in 1896 to foster the work of Labour Churches and to spread the Labour Church idea, Annie Thurston was appointed Cinderella Secretary. But the overall work of unifying Cinderella activities remained largely with Julia Dawson and the Clarion. Labour Church Cinderellas were listed alongside Clarion ones, with no distinction apart from the name.

During the early years of the twentieth century the Cinderella movement was quite strong. In 1903, and possibly in other years as well, a Cinderella Annual was published,[1] Mr. Wilfrid Cooke, son of the Walter Cooke of the first Labour Church Cinderella, informs me that

> The "Cinderellas" were taken over by E. Halton's Manchester Evening Chronicle in the district. This newspaper was able to organize them on a bigger scale.[2]

The main work of the Cinderella movement was brought to fulfillment when F. W. Jowett's Bill permitting school authorities to give school meals was passed by the 1906 Parliament and was put into effect by many local authorities. Though many Cinderella clubs carried on with new emphases, most simply faded out of existence. Jowett made the following statement:

> I remember that famous article of Blatchford's which gave immediate birth to Cinderella clubs in most of the large towns in the North of England. Hundreds, if not thousands, of men and women devoted all their spare time for years running these clubs for poor children. They begged money, which was chiefly spent

---

1. A copy of the 1903 Annual is in the Manchester Public Library.
2. Cf. Appendix, p. 717

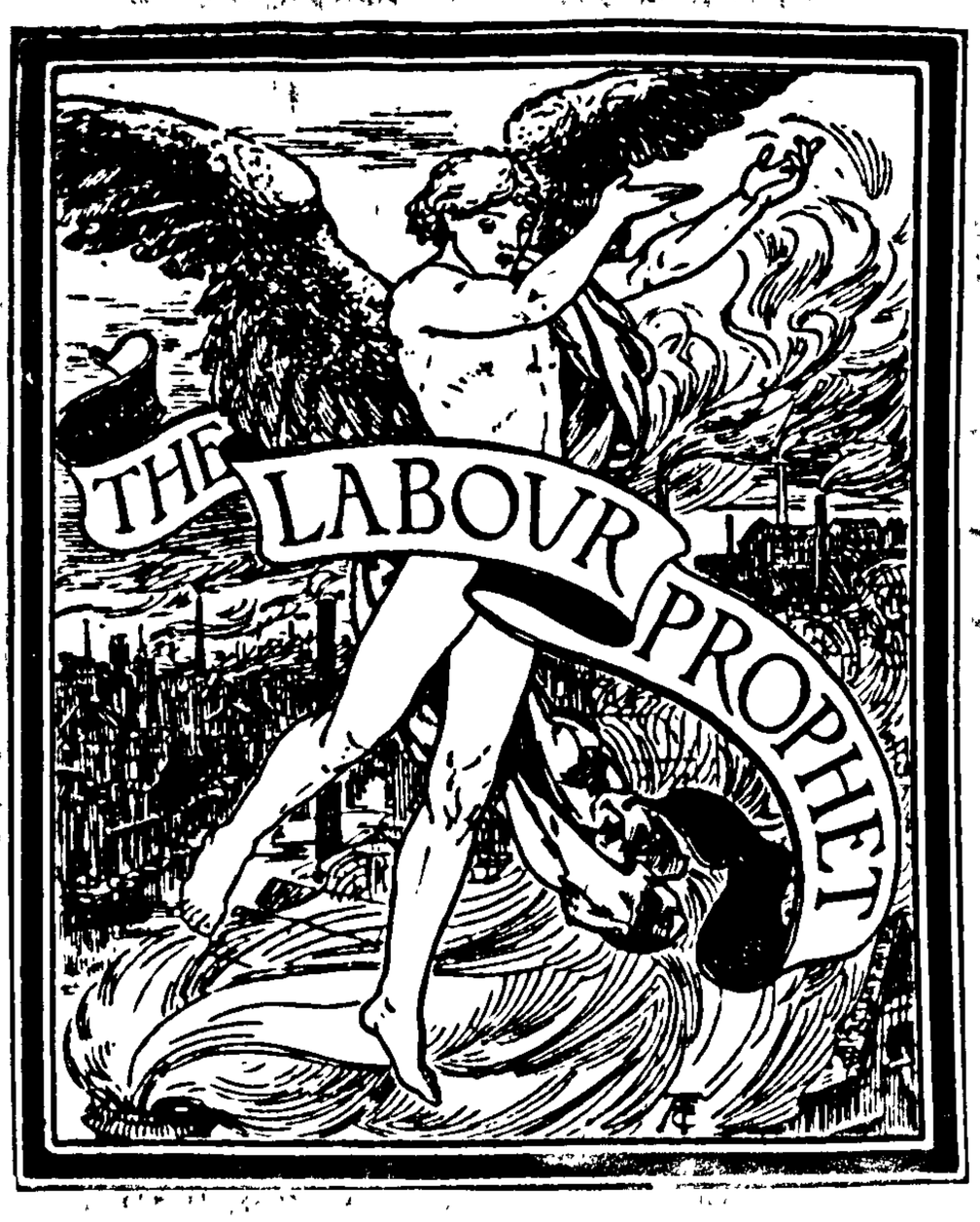
> in providing occasional meals for children who lacked food. They did their best, but it was heartbreaking work. There was never enough money available. Now, however, 40,000 children are being provided with a daily meal at school. Many of the clubs are in existence yet, but they are able to attend to the less immediately necessary wants of the children. In Bradford they are assisting the public authority in supplying clothing and footgear, distributing, for consumption of children under school age, milk at the public expense, and giving to the children occasional excursions and special entertainments.[1]

Labour Church Pioneers

On October the fourth, 1891, the Chorlton Town Hall, Manchester, was the scene of the first Labour Church service; two weeks later a hall capable of seating 1,600 people was hardly sufficient to accommodate those who attended; by the end of the year, from the continuing large congregations, a church of a hundred subscribing members had been organized. When the news of the venture spread to neighbouring areas and distant towns there came a spontaneous response indicating the possibility of numerous such congregations. Trevor's "Church for workingmen" seemed assured. It was only a matter of reaching the interested people and stimulating their thinking. Trevor, with the moral backing of the Manchester and Salford Labour Church congregation, resigned as minister of Upper Brook Street Unitarian Chapel, and gave himself to the development of the Labour Church, spending much of his time editing The Labour Prophet. This penny periodical gained a circulation of 5,000 within a very short time, giving the Labour Church Idea a hearing throughout the length and breadth of the land. The first step towards the creation of a national movement had been successfully completed.

---

1. Clarion, March 21, 1913, p. 5.



(Illustration appearing regularly in connection with Labour Prophet editorials.)

Attention to correspondence from interested people in other towns, preparation of numerous lectures and sermons, arranging for special speakers, the general oversight of the activities of the new congregation, and the preparation of posters, pamphlets, and articles proved too great a burden; before the end of 1891 the new congregation agreed that voluntary help was insufficient; H. A. Atkinson[1] was engaged as General Secretary, relieving Trevor of much of the detail work. A Labour Church movement was underway.

In March, 1892, the Labour Prophet announced that some people in distant towns had already been enrolled as members of the Labour Church, and that special forms of external membership were available to others who might wish to join. It was also announced that all contributions from such persons would be used for propaganda purposes. The response was most gratifying. But the name "External Member" was quite unacceptable; by the suggestion of Tom Wing of Hull, the name "Labour Church Pioneer" was adopted.[2]

---

1. Atkinson held this post for one year before he resigned in order to spend time studying in Cambridge and London. He later married Rosa Bell and emigrated to New Zealand. He was succeeded by Fred Brocklehurst, a Cambridge graduate in theology, who for conscientious reasons would not ask for ordination by the established church.

2. In a Labour Prophet editorial of April, 1892, Trevor explained: "In our last number we said that we would enrol "External Members" of the Labour Church, and have special forms of membership prepared for this purpose. The name adopted, however, did not seem quite the right one, and so we have waited until a better name was suggested. I think we have exactly what we want in "Labour Church Pioneers", which was first proposed in conversation by our good friend Tom Wing, of Hull. It has been handed about for criticism for two or three weeks, and has met with universal approval, so we will adopt it. The name is good, because it suggests personal activity and responsibility. In a new movement, live men and women who are ready to act are of the first importance. None but live folk will be likely to enrol themselves as Pioneers. Others will be willing to give their money, perhaps; these will give their time and service; and these are the people we want." -p. 27

As the number of enthusiastic Pioneers was increasing, it seemed wise that a conference should be called at which these members could meet each other and set up some sort of organization. W. H. Paul Campbell, a former editor of the Christian Socialist, and eight other pioneers met with Trevor to discuss the Labour Church principles, the attitude of the new movement to other religious organizations, and the future development of the Labour Church Movement. This small, but highly stimulating conference was the third step on the way to a Labour Church Union.

The Pioneer program assumed form slowly. A conference was called to meet on July 24th, with Tom Mann as 'resource leader', but nothing in the form of specific organization resulted. Members got to know each other, and kept in touch through correspondence and occasional news reports of their activities in the Labour Prophet.[1] The number of Pioneers also increased slowly, though stimulated by the Labour Prophet competitions in essay writing. Answers to the first topic assigned: "Why is the Labour Movement a Religious Movement?" indicate something of the nature of the work to be done; there was need for a good adult education correspondence program. The following was the reply chosen for publication:

Why Is The Labour Movement A Religious Movement?
by A Weaver

---

1. Often when facing difficulties Pioneers would write to the paper for advice. For instance, the following was recommended to one troubled propagandist: "Don't begin to try to keep right with everyone. If you do, you will surely get wrong with those you are working with, and there will be no real comradship in our ranks. In the words sung to us by our frieds of the Cinderella Glee Club, let us learn to be "Comrades in Arms". -- Prophet, April, 1893, p. 27.

> For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.
> -- St. Matthew.

. . . To the writer there seems to be a great similarity between the Israelitish people of that day and the down-trodden wage-slaves of our present civilisation. Nay, is not the condition of very many of our brothers and sisters far worse? The Israelites, it is said, had bricks to make; but in this country, abounding in wealth, there are thousands and thousands who cannot get bricks to make, though they cry aloud for work to do. . . . The Israelites sent up their cry to heaven; it was heard and answered. . . .

So with the down-trodden wage-slaves of to-day. Their cry has gone forth -- the cry of the harlot, the cry of the submerged, the cry of the weary and overburdened. They cry: "Give us work, food, clothing, shelter (no workhouses), and leisure to live the life that God has given us. To whom must they look for guidance? Is it to the capitalistic governments of the day? Surely not. Where then shall they look? To the churches, with their bishops and clergy, their sects and systems? No, No! They must get outside the existing institutions that are so much under the power of the capitalistic Pharaohs of this day. Many of us have done so. . . . We want something more than political promises and spiritual consolation. Knowing little of the world to come, we want to live in the present, bright, cheerful, happy lives. Nothing butrfreedom from their taskmasters satisfied the Israelites, and nothing short of the same will satisfy the workers of this country.

The emancipation of the workers is slowly but surely working itself out. When we look around and see the many skilled and unskilled workers banding together in Trades' Unions for their mutual protection, and also learning -- slowly, it is true, but still learning -- their power as voters, one begins to understand some little of the Labour Movement. We have often been told that true religion consists in visiting the widows and orphans in their affliction. If this be so, surely the Labour Movement is a religious movement in the highest sense, as it is working for the benefit of the poorest of us. It is "God inrus working out our salvation". Any movement having for its object the emancipation of the Labouring classes must in itself be a righteous movement. . . . It is a religion in itself.

Whenever we hear of hundreds of thousands of our sisters getting a living by selling all that is sacred, and the millions of both sexes struggling together for a livelihood in a country teeming with wealth, one cannot help feeling thankful for the Labour movement, as it strikes at the very root of the evil -- commercial competition -- which is slaying its victims by thousands, offering a yearly sacrifice to the god of Mammon. When we remember these things we cannot come to any other conclusion but that the Labour Movement <u>is</u> a religious movement, seeking to remove all

poverty and destitution from amongst the people, and helping on all things that are tending towards a <u>just balance</u> in the affairs of this life. The knowledge of this, the noblest of all work, should stimulate us to greater work. The fight will be hard and long. Many noble lives will be sacrificed in the cause; but duty calls every true-hearted man and woman to be instant in season and out of season, preaching and helping on the Gospel of the Kingdom to come.

"For a' that, for a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that;
That man to man the world o'er,
Shall brothers be, for a' that." 1

But the Pioneer Program did not fully get under way till the formation of the Labour Church Union provided a Pioneer Secretary.

<u>The Pioneer Program and Adult Education</u>:

At the first Labour Church Union Conference held in July, 1893, Miss K. M. M. Scott was elected Pioneer Secretary; her responsibility was to develop a more aggressive Pioneer program mainly by bringing the Pioneers into closer touch one with another and by preparing monthly reports of Pioneer activity for publication.

Closely related to the Pioneer work was the Correspondence Class begun at the Second Labour Church Union Conference held in November, 1893, under the general supervision of the newly appointed Correspondence Secretary, H. C. Rowe. Part of his responsibility was the extension of adult education work. His first project in this field was the establishment of "Merrie England Classes" to study Robert Blatchford's <u>Merrie England</u>; through the <u>Labour Prophet</u> a competition was conducted for the first four months of 1894.[2]

---

1. <u>Prophet</u>, Aug. 1892, p. 62. Cf. "Socialism as Religion" -- an article by Esther Walker in the <u>Prophet</u>, April, 1893, p. 30.
2. Competition A -- for the best quotations from <u>Merrie England</u> showing that Socialism is not a purely materialistic theory; and the best letter to an imaginary newspaper defending the movement from a charge of being merely materialistic. Competition B --

For more specifically Labour Church reasons Trevor expanded, simultaneously with the above, his "Missionary Class"[1], with instruction in elocution, public speaking, and a study of Edward Clodd's The Childhood of the World, a study in evolutionary concepts.[2]

In May 1894 Miss Eleanor Keeling (Mrs. Jos. Edwards of Liverpool) succeeded Miss Scott as Pioneer secretary; Trevor's 'Missionary Class' became the 'Pioneer Class'. Its membership remained small, but its members were enthusiastic. Its 'text books' became more numerous with study outlines provided for A Sketch of Jewish History to the Birth of Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, several of the Science Primers published by Macmillan & Co., and Trevor's Theology and the Slums and Man's Cry for God. Miss Keeling was of valuable assistance in organizing and inspiring Pioneer activity. In the autumn there were 21 active Pioneers, and plans were laid for a Pioneer library (but this was not developed till late in 1895).

The work of Pioneer secretary became rather burdensome with the time required in marking the answers sent in by members to the set of questions on the prescribed books, and with the large correspondence with members seeking advice on specific problems. Then, too, the class was becoming much more that a mere Pioneer

---

for the best "Merrie England" study group, judged on the basis of the secretary's report. Competition C -- for the best list of quotations from Merrie England and best letter to an imaginary newspaper supporting the contention that Socialism is not merely a class movement.

1. Prior to this time the Missionary Class had been for Manchester only; it was now offered as a correspondence class.
2. Later the class proceeded to Clodd's the Childhood of Religion and his Story of Creation.

activity, for it included many who were associated with active Labour Church congregations. It was rechristened "Our Correspondence Class.

In the autumn of 1894 Miss Keeling, due to ill health, had to retire from active association with the Pioneers. Into the vacancy created came Miss Mary G. Burnett of London, and a group of a dozen examiners, each well trained in his own field. The work of the Pioneers quietly drops out of the picture, and attention is given to the building up of the "Correspondence Class".

When Mary Burnett took over there were 21 active members. In the following spring there were 40, with an average of two sets of questions going out to each student each month. At the end of 1896, an assistant secretary was required to help cope with the expanded program. Mr. A. L. Vogle was appointed. The students, mostly men, were eager for learning; their biggest complaint was lack of leisure time to devote to reading and study. A few women were active members of the class, but up till 1897 repeated requests for more to join them received only slight response; after that there was a slight improvement. As the class grew in numbers, so did the number of books for which study outlines and set questions were prepared. These included F. J. Gould's A Concise History of Religion, Blatchford's Merrie England, the Fabian Essays, Edward Carpenter's England's Ideal, Carlyle's Past and Present, A. H. D. Acland & Benj. Jones' Working Men Co-operators, S. R. Gardiner's The Puritan Revolution, George Elliott's Silas Marner, Olive Schreiner's The Story of an African Farm, Florence Nightingale's Notes on Nursing, and John J. Pilley's Hygiene : The Principles of Health.[1] Courses of study in Economics, Socialism,

---

1. Prophet, October, 1894, p. 139

History, Evolution, Natural History, Botany, Geology, Composition, and Grammatical Analysis were offered. To help supply needed 'text books' a lending library was set up, its shelves filled from Fabian Book Boxes and by volumes donated or loaned by interested people. These volumes included: M. J. Savage The Religion of Evolution, J. T. Sunderland The Bible: Its Origin Growth & Character, H. de B. Gibbons The Industrial History of England, J. S. Mackenzie An Introduction to Social Philosophy, Stanton Coit Neighbourhood Guilds, John Fiske Mans Destiny, J. H. Muirhead The Elements of Ethics. The last four were "presented by the author". At the beginning of 1897 there were about 100 volumes well distributed over the fields of human knowledge. Among the books most in demand were Blatchford's Merrie England , Ruskins Unto This Last and Clodd's Childhood of Religions.

Some of the student's letters illustrate the kind of work that was done in the Correspondence Class.[1] In answer to the question: "How has the reading of Edward Clodd's Childhood of Religion affected your own ideas of Religion?" one student replied:

> My religious horizon has been greatly widened. I used to consider that the Christian Religion was the Religion. I now see that it is one among many Religions, which Religions, too, have had their effect upon the Christian Religion. As I recognize many sects in Christianity and was taught to be tolerant to other sects, so now I see Christianity is one of many Religions, and desire to exercise a charitable position toward the others. In fact, I am beginning to feel that it matters not whether I am a Christian, but whether I am religious, and obey what I believe to be correct.

Some students were very much concerned as to the type of books they should read:

---

1. Letters are quoted from the Prophet, June and July, 1895.

> I am very fond of reading, especially poetry, but since I came to live in the north I have hardly met with anybody who cared for it, so I don't read as much as I used to. . . . I am ashamed to say I often have spells of novel reading, to the utter neglect of more serious matter.

Some students set themselves lengthy and difficult reading assignments:

> Will you kindly forward the set of questions for Merrie England? I think that it would be about the best book for me to start a systematic study with. Since my first knowledge of the Clarion (at its commencement) my mind has been rushing at express speed through a country the chief landmarks of which are the writings of Ruskin, Carlyle, Tolstoi, Thoreau, Mazzini, Clodd, Max Muller's Sacred Book of the East, Cobbett, Richard Jefferies, beside a number of odd books, reviews, and newspaper articles. You will easily form an idea of the state of my mind; however, "We shall arrive."
>
> I was 24 when I first read any of Ruskin, Carlyle, or any I have mentioned. If I had only met them when about 16! but the saddest words are, "It might have been!" Yet --
>
> The future hides in it
> Gladness and sorrow;
> We press still thorow,
> Naught that abides in it
> Daunting us, -- Onward!

Many students were very appreciative of the efforts of their secretary and teacher who successfully opened up new vistas of cultural and educational reading:

> Many thanks for your chatty letter; from its length and speedy arrival, I gather that you are a most untiring and enthusiastic Secretary. What you said about the scenery of the book induced me to read it again, and pay particular attention to it. When I did so, I found there was so much I had not noticed before, that it was almost like reading a new book.

As the number and scope of the correspondence courses increased the secretaries and examiners were unable to give assistance on the same scale as had previously been possible, and a number of students, having become active in local socialist affairs, were not as willing to give as much time. In June 1897 a supplementary system was introduced whereby the members exchanged letters for comment and

criticism. A little later this system was replaced by a 'correspondence chain': a particularly good essay or paper[1] was mailed to a member of the chain, with instructions that he should study the document and the criticisms following it, append his own comments and criticisms, and send it on to the next member on the list. The 'Correspondence Circle' as it came to be known, continued for some time, but with the development of workingmen's colleges (of which the Correspondence Class was one of many forerunners), and particularly the extension department of Ruskin College, founded in February 1899, under Bertram Wilson[2] there was no longer the need for Church sponsored extension courses. Instead the Labour Church gave strong support and patronage to Wilson's Extension department of Ruskin College, to Fabian Book Boxes, to Reading Circles[3], and similar ventures.

After the Correspondence Class was given up, Trevor began his Summer School of Natural Religion (1899). Arthur E. H. Atkinson of Manchester, was one of the students. He writes of his experiences:

It is entirely different from any school I know of, and in

---

1. R. A. Beckett's Labour Church and Its Future, Robert Blatchford's The New Religion, and numerous Fabian Tracts were used in these 'Circulating portfolios'. It was reported that these were working well in June 1898.
2. Bertram Wilson was a strong Labour Church man and a former Labour Church secretary, who had done such excellent work in the Hanley Labour Church Anti-Lead Poisoning campaign.
3. In relation to Adult Education: The National Home Reading Union organized reasonably priced holidays (31/6 per week) for recreation and education. Labour Church people were active in leadership and participation, particularly from 1895 onward. The Holiday scheme began with a group of 30 in 1891; and was offered to the public the following year. T. A. Leonard, Robt. Blatchford, and John Trevor were among the early leaders.

my opinion, much better also. Mr. Trevor does not lay down any hard and fast rules or course of study to be followed, but tries to make the best of the time by touching upon those subjects which he thinks the student needs most. We went several times for a walk in the woods and talked over various questions, principally with regard to religion. I think that nothing could equal those conversations we had in the woods for elucidating the various questions we spoke about. The country looked so beautiful in the bright sunshine; the birds were singing in the trees, and everything seemed as bright and joyous that we could not help but feel benefited by it. People must be very sad indeed if they cannot be cheered and gladened by the sweet face of nature. Among the books, I read passages from Emerson, Mazzini, Whitman, and Woodsworth and a few other authors, and also had some lessons in elocution. Most of my reading was done in the open air, and this in my opinion is both better and more enjoyable.

> I derived a great deal of benefit both in mind and body from my stay in Horsted Keynes.[1]

Other authors studied at the "Summer School" included Matthew Arnold, Ruskin, Carlyle, Carpenter, Morris, Balmsforth, Lamennais and a number of others. Trevor sometimes read aloud, sometimes asked the student to read aloud, and sometimes merely suggested private reading of particular passages. Discussion and encouragement of the student to express himself was an important aspect of Trevor's tuition.

Trevor's home in Horsted Keynes was the location of the School. Here Labour Church workers, mostly young men, could stay for a few days or for several weeks. There was seldom more than one student at any one time, and the stay rarely exceeded a fortnight. The "School" was basically a retreat, a "Wayside Inn" where Trevor could be a fellow traveller along life's highway. As a guide he would merely point out the signposts; he would consciously refrain from all forms of dogmatism as to which road one should follow. The main objective was the moral and spiritual expansion and growth of

---

1. *Record*, Oct. 1899, p. 4.

each person according to his individual aptitudes.

S. G. Hobson's criticism of the numerous socialist study groups would not apply to The Summer School of Natural Religion, though it might accurately describe some Labour Church groups:

> . . . provincial Socialism was fed on tracts and lectures; became peptonised; existed on formulae and unverified principles; in consequence went wrong on several crucial issues.[1]

Trevor's teaching was anything but the imparting of formulae.

The Labour Church Union:

The original Labour Church congregation had been in existence only four months when W. H. Paul Campbell, J. Bruce Wallace, and Joseph Burgess attempted to form a congregation in Salmon's Lane, London.[2] Though some excellent propaganda work was done, a congregation did not thrive, so the credit for the first congregation outside Manchester must go to Bolton where, in April, 1892, the Rev. B. J. Harker made Duke's Alley Chapel into a Labour Church

> . . . so far as their Congregational constitution would allow.[3]

Oldham and Sheffield Labour Churches came within the following month, just before the General Election. Bradford followed immediately after it.[4] During the summer and autumn another six congregations were formed, with another four throughout the country and several branches in Manchester added early in 1893. Trevor began to suggest the wisdom and possibility of a Labour Church Union

> . . . rendered necessary through the breakdown of my health, and

---

1. S. G. Hobson, Pilgrim To The Left, pp. 44f.
2. Cf. Appendix p. 423f.
3. Cf. Appendix p. 344
4. Cf. Appendix p. 333ff

> the development of difficulties which could only be satisfactorily dealt with by a properly constituted authority.[1]

Though Trevor does not further indicate his meaning, later developments would suggest that the financial requirements of a Secretary were among the 'difficulties'. Expenses and salary had to be paid, and income was not sufficient to meet expenditures. A Labour Church Union could shoulder this responsibility.

In November 1891 Trevor had hired an assistant, H. A. Atkinson, to lighten the duties which were devolving upon him as a result of spontaneous response to the first series of services. When the Manchester and Salford congregation was organized, Atkinson was asked to assume the post of General Secretary, which he filled very adequately for one year, after which he left to pursue further academic studies. He was succeeded by Fred Brocklehurst, a Cambridge Divinity student who, for conscientious reasons would not ask for ordination by the Church. Atkinson had been very much occupied with the development of the Manchester and Salford work, so when Brocklehurst took over all was in an excellent state of organization; his duties were to assist the new congregations forming throughout the country. He was to be as it were, an organizing secretary. But this involved greater expense, and may we suppose, a feeling that other congregations should share the financial burden. To meet this need, the first Conference, at which the Labour Church Union was formed, was convened in Manchester on July 22nd and 23rd, 1893.

---

1. Encyclopaedia of Social Reform; Article on the Labour Church. cf. also Prophet, May 1893, p. 41

Seventeen delegates representing ten Churches,[1] and Pioneers from nine districts gathered at the Labour Church Institute to hear a full report of the formation and progress of Labour Church work. Trevor spoke of his religious convictions; H. V. Herford reported on the financial side of the venture; Fred Brocklehurst reported on his activities in promoting extension of the movement; and Delegates told of their own congregations. A resolution was then passed:

> That the time has come when it is desirable that a Labour Church Union should be formed.[2]

The Conference set to work to give form to such a Union, accepting, after considerable discussion and debate, the Principles as used by the Manchester and Salford congregation. The "Objects" of the Union were stated:

> The Development of the Religion of the Labour Movement.
>
> The realisation of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth by the establishment of a state of society founded upon Love and Justice.[2]

An executive was elected, to which was entrusted the drafting of the constitution.

Four months later a second Conference was held to amend, if need be, and to ratify the Constitution, and to thus confirm a central, constitutional, authority for the Labour Churches. At this Conference a marked difference of emphasis between Trevor and Brocklehurst became evident. Trevor's mission was the development of "the inner life of the Labour Movement" while Brocklehurst emphasized the need for practical expression of one's religious

---

1. Only four fully organized congregations were unrepresented.
2. Prophet, Aug. 1893, p. 76.

enthusiasm. There seems to be no necessary clash of ideas here, but apparently the difference in emphasis was accompanied by a difference of personalities. Indeed, S. G. Hobson claims that his main task at the Conferences and Council meetings was to keep peace between the two of them.[1]

In August, 1894, the Administrative Council of the I. L. P. passed a resolution, apparently at the request of the Labour Church Union Council:

> That branches of the Independent Labour Party, wherever practicable, should run a Sunday meeting on Labour Church lines.[2]

It is not clear whether Trevor approved of this resolution or not; it is probably that he did not for, while he always advocated good relations between party and Church, it was his constant opinion that they should maintain strict independence one of the other. His response to the resolution was at first mild caution, followed not long after by open criticism of party sponsorship as a denial of the religious basis of the Churches, and as a tendency to make of the congregation a mere adjunct of the political machine. Fred Brocklehurst was in a more advantageous position to propose and urge the I. L. P. to adopt such a resolution. Perhaps here is a further indication of the widening gulf between the General Secretary and the Founder of the Labour Church movement.

At the Annual Conference in November, 1894, divisions came out into the open. Brocklehurst proposed the deletion of the Principles and Objects of the Labour Churches, and the substitution of the

---

1. S. G. Hobson, Pilgrim To The Left, p. 41.
2. Prophet, Sept. 1894, p. 124. Pelling suggests that the resolution was passed in May, 1894, at Trevor's request.

following:

> The Labour Church movement is a union of all those who, by organised or individual effort, are emphasising or developing the moral and ethical aspect of the Labour Movement.
>
> The Annual Conference is the outward expression of the union of spirit, purpose, and work.

The amendment was lost by a narrow margin, nine to eleven.[1]

After the Conference was over the quarrel continued, largely in financial terms. Brocklehurst, whose salary was over a year in arrears, felt that the Union had some claim on the contributions made through the Labour Prophet.[2] He was backed up by the treasurer, Sam Hodgkinson, and several Council members. Trevor countered by renaming the 'Central Fund' the 'Labour Prophet Fund', withdrawing it from the realm of Labour Church control, and appointing John Tenny of London as its treasurer. It is interesting that the complete democratic government of the Labour Church could only be maintained by such action. When Trevor had wanted the Union to take over the Labour Prophet (November 1893) it would not accept the responsibility. He then went ahead on his own, developing his program and its means of support. Now he found that his work was threatened. He had to exert strong leadership by methods which denied democratic control, to allow his own work to be directed by those who did not fully understand his objectives, or to step outside the framework of democratic government which had been set up. He chose the latter alternative, and resigned[3] as chairman of the

---

1. Cf. Appendix, pp 481f.
2. For a complete discussion of financial arrangements, see infra pp 162ff.
3. In December, 1894, just following the renaming of the Central Fund and just before his resignation as Chairman, Trevor's wife died suddenly. Within four months he married again. These developments may have influenced his resignation.

Union. In the pages of the Labour Prophet during the next few months, the name of the General Secretary was conspicuous by its absence.

At the Annual Conference in November of 1895 the post of General Secretary was abolished due to the inability of the Union to meet the financial obligations involved, and the name of Fred Brocklehurst gradually dropped out of Labour Church affairs. For a number of years he was a popular lecturer, but he took no part in executive responsibility.

The Labour Church Union Conferences spent much time and energy in amending the constitution, till in 1897 the 'Gordian Knot' was cut by abolishing it altogether, and appointing only a President to preside over an annual Conference, the arrangements for which were to be looked after by the Church in whose city the meetings were to be held. For the following few years, with no questions of organization or finance, the union operated smoothly as,, using Albert Mêtin's description, a 'religious anarchy'. But life and vitality decreased year by year, with the exception of a rally in 1898 stimulated by the Hanley anti-lead poisoning campaign and another in 1901 stimulated by the anti-war feeling, till 1903. In that year a Labour Church Union Committee was elected, a Central Fund set up, and a constitution drafted.

Following Conferences again spent time and energy revising and amending the constitution, mostly in the direction of a more secular and more strictly socialistic position. The Union and the individual Churches continued to increase in vitality till the General Election of 1906, when something of the original enthusiasm returned. Labour Churches were turning away people by the hundreds.

The popularity of Labour Churches continued for a number of years, but their emphasis gradually changed from the religious to the political. The Union played a smaller and smaller part. After 1910 records of the Annual conferences are practically non-existent. Advertisements and announcements indicate that the Conferences were held annually till 1914, when, because of the war they were 'temporarily' discontinued. When the war ended only a few Labour Church congregations revived; The movement itself, in Great Britain,[1] had come to an end.

Financial Arrangements of the Labour Church Union:

The surviving records do not present a clear picture of the financial arrangements of the Labour Church Union. The following reconstruction is as accurate as possible. While it is admitted some assumptions are made, the main items are fully documented.

Preliminary: Trevor appealed to a number of friends in Upper Brook Street Chapel and elsewhere; £47, 9s. were subscribed prior to the first service, most of which was spent in the early arrangements.[2] Collections from the early services and the subscriptions from members and friends went into a common fund first administered by Trevor personally, then from the beginning of November by a provisional Finance Committee composed of Trevor as chairman, J. G. Thomas as secretary, F. H. Breedon and Alf. Dugdale. This fund was fairly generously supported by middle-class sympathizers of the Labour Church, for it was sufficient to cover the operating expenses of the Manchester and Salford congregation (hall rentals,

---

1. During the years 1918 to 1920 several congregations were formed in Canada. Cf. Appendix, pp. 379ff. & 464 & 470ff.
2. Cf. Appendix, p. 507.

lecturer's travel expenses and fees, advertising costs), the salary and expenses of a General Secretary, the publication costs of pamphlets and leaflets, and (after April 1892) the cost of leasing and remodelling a house on St. John's Parade, Byrom St. as the Labour Church Institute.

The Labour Prophet deficit was apparently Trevor's own responsibility, as was his means of financial support. It seems probable that a number of people were making personal contributions to Trevor for no Labour Church funds were used for a salary or honorarium for him. There has been uncovered no evidence of private means sufficient to support his family and the Labour Prophet deficit does not indicate that it was a source of income - though he may have paid himself a salary before the deficit was calculated.

There was a small income to the Labour Church funds from working-class readers of the Labour Prophet who enrolled as "External Members" or, as they were named, "Labour Church Pioneers". It October 1892 this amounted to £1, 14s., 6d.; a month later it was £2, 1s., 10d.; in July 1894 £5, 14s. This money was pledged to extension work, but for the first year no separate accounts were kept, (though public acknowledgement of donations were made) probably because far more was spent on extension work than was received through this channel.

To increase the Pioneer Fund, collecting cards were introduced: the idea was none too popular. The following extracts from Pioneer's letters are illustrative:

> I will do what little I can with the collecting card, but that little will, I fear, be microscopic. We have a joiners strike

> on at present, and collections are being arranged for that; and collections are being made very often for men who have been injured, or who have been ill for long periods. The contribution of the trade union to which most of my acquaintances belong are very heavy, and even the most good natured among my shopmates are beginning to grumble about the frequent appeals.
>
> Yours of the 15th enclosing the collecting card puts me to the test and the breakdown point is soon reached. Good friend, I hate collecting cards. Every church and chapel makes them their tax collector and in most households the district visitor is but another name for beggar, and the whole system is generally spoken of with contempt by working men.[1]

But, popular or not, the collecting cards did bring in a fairly steady income.

Audited statements of accounts were always available to contributors on request. Unfortunately very few such statements are now extant, so a complete financial picture cannot be presented.

The Extension Fund: In December 1892 Trevor announced that it would be possible to completely separate the financial affairs of the Manchester and Salford congregation from the expenses of the movement as a whole. This was accomplished by setting up the Extension Fund, with Hugh V. Herford as treasurer. All moneys which had formerly been acknowledged as 'Subscriptions' and as contributions to the "Pioneer Fund" were to be devoted to this new account, which was responsible for the salary and expenses of the General Secretary (Fred Brocklehurst who had succeeded H. A. Atkinson), for the publication of the Labour Church Hymn Book and other leaflets and pamphlets, and for the underwriting of any deficit in any town where local considerations made a first Labour Church Service advisable.

---

1. Prophet, Sept. 1893, p. 92.

At the first Conference of Labour Churches, when the Labour Church Union was formed (July 22nd, 1893) the Union assumed responsibility for the Extension Fund; H. V. Herford was retained as treasurer. Local congregations were to be responsible for their own financing (apart from initial assistance as indicated above), and were to make contributions to the Extension Fund. Apparently Trevor was to retain full personal responsibility for the Labour Prophet.

Free Literature Fund: A fund to pay the costs of publishing and distributing Labour Literature was established as a supplement to the Extension Fund. It was sustained for several months from June, 1893, and was later absorbed into the Extension Fund. The Free Literature Fund was never very large.

Philanthropic and Charitable Funds: CINDERELLA FUND: When the Manchester and Salford Labour Church formed a Cinderella club a number of contributions from outside sources were made to support this particular effort. To accommodate such donors the Labour Prophet set up a Cinderella Fund. From November 1892 for several months contributions were received. After 1893 several appeals for local Cinderella projects were published, but the paper did not sponsor a national appeal.

BROOMSGROVE NAILERS: Just at the time of the formation of the first Labour Church the nailers of Broomsgrove were in the midst of an industrial dispute; a strike was called. The Church made the Nailers' cause its own, and established an assistance fund. In close co-operation with the newly established Clarion appeals were made; all contributions were turned over to the Sunday Chronicle fund. On three occasions Labour Church collections were taken for this purpose, one of which realized £12, 3s. 9d. Under the auspices of the Sunday

Chronicle a Sunday Demonstration, in which the Labour Church co-operated, was held in the Prince of Wales Theatre, Salford. £150 was received in aid of the strikers. It was Trevor's proud privilege to be part of the delegation which took the money personally to Broomsgrove.

MANCHESTER MAT MAKERS[1]: £32, 18s. 6½d. was contributed through the Labour Church, the Labour Prophet, and the Clarion. The fund was initiated by Trevor and the Labour Church.

CARDROOM WORKERS APPEAL: Contributions to this fund were acknowledged in the Labour Prophet for the months from April to June, 1893. A. M. Thompson (Dangle of Clarion fame) organized sixty Labour Church collectors to be at the doors of the Manchester theatres on a Saturday evening; £10, 19s. 2½d. was collected that evening.[2] Through its many projects the Labour Churches contributed £72, 13s. plus anything that may have gone through other channels.

HULL DOCKERS' STRIKE: In May, 1893, it was reported that £50, 8s. 10d. was sent through Labour Church channels plus "considerably more" that was sent direct to Hull.

W. K. HALL'S ELECTION EXPENSE FUND: In May, 1892, the Labour Churches and the Labour Prophet endorsed this fund.

BRISTOL CONFECTIONERY GIRLS, 1893: Support was solicited through the Labour Prophet.

SCOTTISH COAL MINERS: During the Autumn of 1894 support was solicited, but contributions were to be sent through other channels.

---

1. Cf. Appendix, pp. 430f.
2. Cf. Appendix, p. 435. Two or three of the members of the Manchester and Salford congregation vividly recall this evening. One member walked eight miles that he might have the privilege of participating.

After 1894 the Labour Prophet did not undertake the solicitation of funds, though it did give prominent place to news items about the condition of workers in strike situations, and others who might require assistance. Local congregations often set up special funds to help out such situations, and they gave liberally to funds set up by other agencies such as the Clarion and the Labour Leader.

The Central Fund: At the second Labour Church Union Conference, November, 1893, Trevor put before the delegates the matter of the deficit in the operation of the Labour Prophet. The following resolution was the result:

> That this Conference desires to impress upon all Labour Churches, and upon all others interested in Labour Church work, the desirability of extending the sale of the Labour Prophet.[1]

This still left Trevor personally responsible for the deficit.

This Conference approved a scheme of re-organization of the work and responsibility of the Chairman (Trevor) and the General Secretary (Brocklehurst) which made possible the engaging of a Corresponding Secretary to assist Trevor in the preparation of literature for the Labour Church movement. The arduous routine of distributing the Labour Prophet was turned over to the printing and publishing firm. The financial arrangements to make possible this new division of responsibilities were left with a special committee, who made the following recommendations: The Extension Fund was to remain as it was, with responsibility for the General Secretary, and the work of the Conferences, and the expenses of the Union executive. A Central Fund was established to enable Trevor to carry on his work, to pay the salary of a Corresponding Secretary, and to publish Labour Church

---

1. Prophet, Jan. 1894, p. 16

literature. In March, 1894, this fund, with the approval of the Union executive accepted responsibility for the Labour Prophet deficit. Apparently Trevor's personal income and support did not come out of this fund, at least not directly. Whether or not he drew a salary as editor of the Labour Prophet is not known. In May H. V. Herford who was treasurer of both funds resigned the Extension Fund to be succeeded by Sam Hodgkinson of Bolton. Herford remained treasurer of the Central Fund.

In December, 1894, the Central Fund was dissolved, and replaced by the 'Labour Prophet Fund'. Trevor made the following explanation:

> A year ago the Central Fund was inaugurated by the Council of the Labour Church Union to enable me to carry on my work for the Labour Church more effectively, the Extension Fund being devoted to the maintenance of the work of our General Secretary. But for this arrangement, my work would probably have come to an end. With the invaluable assistance of its Treasurer, H. V. Herford, the Central Fund has been placed on a fairly secure footing, though it has involved the expenditure of a deal of time and energy.
>
> But, unfortunately, Mr. Hodgkinson, the treasurer of the Extension Fund, has for some time challenged my right to raise money in the name of the Labour Churches in order to carry on my personal work. He says it is not democratic. I have pointed to the terms of the arrangement made by the Council, to which he assented as a member, and to the fact that the nature of the Fund has always been stated most explicitly, so that there could be no misunderstanding about it. But he is not satisfied. Moreover, on behalf of the Bolton Labour Church, he brought a resolution to the Conference at Bradford which means that the Bolton Labour Church adopts his view of the situation. This resolution is referred, with other resolutions affecting finances, to the Conference Committee to deal with.
>
> Now the whole Labour movement is far too sensitive on the subjects of Democracy and Finance for me to feel disposed to maintain a line of action which is distinctly opposed by one of the Labour Churches. Therefore, with the concurrence of H. V. Herford, the Treasurer, I have decided to change the name of the Central Fund to the Labour Prophet Fund, and I hope this step will put me right with our friends at Bolton. I will promise, moreover, that I will not place the name of the Labour Church at the head of my appeals for money, nor even at the head of my notepaper.[1]

---

1. Prophet, Dec. 1894, p. 168.

In the above explanation Trevor notes that the Central Fund was on a "fairly secure footing". Meanwhile the Extension Fund had been suffering a severe deficit. The congregations had not honoured their pledge to devote several collections annually to the support of the Labour Church Union. In November, 1894, the deficit stood at £51, 9s. 4d., which was more than a year's remuneration for the General Secretary. In May of that year Brocklehurst had written:

> Let me respectfully submit to the Labour Churches that they have not fulfilled their promises with respect to this fund. At the last Conference they pledged themselves to support it by periodic collections. They have not done so; and unless they speedily do something to redeem their promises I shall feel it to be a duty, both to them and the Council, to resign a position which entails much work and worry, but which hitherto has not met with adequate support at the hands of the Churches.[1]

The support requested was not forthcoming and Brocklehurst gave notice:

> I regret to have to announce that at the last meeting of the Council I felt compelled, owing to a lack of general support on the part of the Churches, to give notice of the resignation of my position as General Secretary of the Labour Church Union. This notice expires on the date of the next Conference mentioned below. The failure of the Churches to realise their responsibilities and duties toward the Extension Fund has rendered this step necessary, and I have taken it with a view to giving them an opportunity of saying at the next Conference, whether or not they desire to retain my connection with the Labour Church Movement. If it is their wish that I should remain their General Secretary I am quite willing to do so, but in that case other financial arrangements will have to be made between us.[2]

Other financial arrangements were made, at the direction of the Conference, by the Council; Brocklehurst remained as Secretary for another year. To prevent a recurrence of similar financial difficulties Brocklehurst was free to charge a fee for lectures and to earn money in any other suitable way. In accepting these arrangements he wrote:

> I consent to retain this office, but on a different footing.

---

1. Prophet, May, 1894, p. 64
2. Prophet, September, 1894, p. 124

> Hitherto you have claimed the whole of my time, and declared that I should alone be the paid servant of the Labour Church Union. Under these conditions I was forbidden to charge for lecturing or for any other service to the general movement. All this is changed. I shall henceforth charge for my lectures and hold myself free to raise money in other ways. . . .
>
> I do not blame the Churches entirely for this neglect of theirs. The causes of this injustice lie deeper than appear on the surface, they are soon to be dealt with by the Conference Committee.[1]

There is no indication of what the underlying injustice was. It is probably safe to conclude that it was the fact that Trevor and H. C. Rowe (the Corresponding Secretary) were operating on an adequate financial basis while Brocklehurst had to contend with an ever mounting unpaid balance respecting his salary. Trevor's solution merely removed the source of trouble from the arena of Labour Church control, but left the sore to fester and to emphasize the undertones of disagreement regarding policy between Brocklehurst and Trevor.

Had harmony prevailed between Trevor and Brocklehurst the history of the Labour Church Movement might have been quite different. As it was, several months went by before the Labour Prophet carried any news of Labour Church funds, and Brocklehurst's name was more conspicuous by its absence than by acknowledgement of his work as General Secretary of the Union. Within a few months Trevor moved to London, perhaps in part to reduce the tension which must have been present when serious differences regarding finance and policy were being discussed.

Labour Church Union Funds, 1895; and the Fred Brocklehurst Fund: After the creation of the Labour Prophet Fund the Labour Prophet made no mention of the Extension Fund; but apparently it was con-

---

1. L. Prophet, December, 1894, p. 176.

tinued under the name of the Labour Church Union, for the Treasurer, Sam Hodgkinson, submitted the following statement to the Halifax Conference in November, 1895:

Income and Expenditure Account, Oct. 1, 1894, to Sept. 30, 1895. [1]

Income:				Expenditure:			
Subscriptions	2	15	10	Bal. due Treasurer, Sept. 30, 1894	3	16	4
Pioneers	0	18	0	Secretary's salary	21	19	7
Labour Churches	26	2	7	Committee meeting expenses	1	17	6
Balance due Treasurer	1	10	7	Secretary's postages and petty cash	2	18	10
				Bank interest	0	4	9
	30	17	0		30	17	0
Liabilities:				**Assets:**			
Sundry creditors:				Free Lit. Account	2	3	3
Taylor, Garnett & Co.	1	5	0	Deficiency		12	4
Treasurer	1	10	7				
	2	15	7		2	15	7

This statement did not show salary due to the General Secretary: At the beginning of the financial year £53, 7s. 6d. had been due to Brocklehurst who had been paid, as shown above, only £21, 19s. 7d. He generously remitted the balance, but in the meantime an honourarium of £50 was due for the year 1895.

The 1895 Conference reluctantly agreed that it could not retain the services of a General Secretary any longer, so appointed an Honourary Secretary, and thereafter, accepted only what help Brocklehurst could give gratis. The only expenses of the Labour Church Union after 1896 were a small fund to cover miscellaneous items, the costs of the annual Conferences, and the deficit to Brocklehurst.

The Labour Church response respecting its obligation to its former General Secretary was very slow till his dramatic stay in "Her Majesty's Temperance Hotel, Strangeways". Brocklehurst had been

---

1. Prophet, December, 1895, p.191.

apprehended while speaking on labour and social questions in a secluded part of Boggart Clough, Manchester, on June 14th, 1896. On the 19th he had been charged before Mr. Headlam with an infringement of a rule of the City Council Parks Committee, and sentenced to a fine of £5 and costs or a month in prison. On principle he had chosen the latter.[1]

Shortly after Brocklehurst's release from Prison, the Labour Churches were able to pay him about £5; during his year's convalescence from ill health resulting from prison treatment, the remainder of the debt was paid. In November £22 remained; by April, 1897, this had been reduced to £2, 19s. 1½d., and was eliminated shortly thereafter.

The Labour Prophet Fund: As explained above the Labour Prophet Fund, as separate and distinct from the affairs of the Labour Church Union, came into being at the beginning of 1895, at which time it was on "fairly secure footing" financially speaking. Its Treasurer, John Tenney of London (H. V. Herford had resigned with the termination of the Central Fund), issued the first financial statement in October, 1895, covering the period from October the first, 1894 (while it was still the Central Fund) to September the thirtieth, 1895. The year began with a deficit of approximately £16; contributions of £206 were received; expenses amounting to £242 (made up as follows: Labour Prophet deficit, £74; distribution of free literature, £21; H. C. Rowe's salary at £2 per week, £104; printing, postage, and miscellaneous expenditures, £43) were incurred, leaving a deficit of £52

---

1. Of his prison experiences, Brocklehurst wrote a series of newspaper articles which were later published in book form: I Was In Prison, by T. Fisher Unwin, London, in 1898.

at the closing of the books.[1]

The worry and anxiety of so large a deficit weighed heavily on Trevor, for he, with slender means could not cope with it, particularly when another of his periods of depression was upon him and he could not make public appearances. The situation was severely aggravated during the early months of 1898, for the income of the Fund kept decreasing[2] till the deficit exceeded £100. The situation was met by two steps: the Labour Brotherhood was formed, and reluctantly, the office of Correspondence Secretary was abolished. H. C. Rowe's services were retained only in so far as he could volunteer them.

The Labour Brotherhood took the financial affairs of the Labour Prophet in hand. When in September Trevor's doctor advised several months complete rest, R. A. Beckett, a member of the Brotherhood, assumed the acting editorship of the paper. After five months Trevor was no better, so the Brotherhood urged him to go abroad. With the "kind help of some generous friends" he went to France in March of 1897. He returned in July to take up his work again, but found himself unable for the task. He announced his intention of permanently retiring. The Labour Prophet Fund was to be wound up as soon as the deficit could be cleared. It was then £160; this Trevor accepted as his own personal responsibility.

With the August issue the Labour Prophet, with fewer pages and less expensive format, came out under the editorship of R. A. Beckett. Several people had pledged sufficient support to keep the smaller paper going; public appeals were not made for this 'Labour Prophet

---

1. Prophet, November 1895, p. 168.
2. January, £30; Feb. £20; Mar. £8; April, £7; May, £11; June, £8; July, £5.

Maintenance Fund'; but contributions were solicited to liquidate the old 'Labour Prophet Fund'.

The Labour Church Brotherhood:

The Labour Church Brotherhood was first conceived by Trevor in 1894, but was not immediately put into effect. Trevor's Missionary Class had done good work, but it had not developed the leadership which Trevor had anticipated, nor had it developed what he called 'personal' life, i.e., a living sense of God. When Trevor moved to London in April, 1896, he and the Treasurer, John Tenney, the Secretary, H. C. Rowe, and the Correspondence Class Secretary, Mary Burnett decided to organize the Brotherhood. Several others in London joined them.

The main objects of the Brotherhood were to develop religious life, to provide a list of suitable speakers, to promote public meetings, and to carry on the work of the Labour Prophet Fund. It was to be a supplement to the Labour Churches, providing leadership without assuming power or authority.

A Labour Church Brotherhood Conference was called by Ernest Williams and R. A. Beckett, to meet in the spring of 1896. Ten charter members met on June the first, each willing to commit himself to a definite task. The following offices were decided:

General Secretary	Ernest Williams
Financial Secretary	R. A. Beckett
Labour Church Secretary	A. W. Hildreth
Literature Secretary	A. J. Waldegrave
Press Secretary	Tom Foster
Correspondence Class Secretary	Mary Burnett
Treasurer of the Labour Prophet Fund	John Tenney
Cinderella Secretary (added later)	Annie Thurston [1]

The members of the Brotherhood worked hard, and gave generously toward the liquidation of the Labour Prophet Fund deficit which they

---

1. Prophet, ~~September~~ July, 1896. p. 107.

inherited; nevertheless it slowly grew larger. However they did succeed in giving leadership to the Labour Church movement, and in keeping the Labour Prophet going during Trevor's eighteen month 'retirement'. When the publication of the Labour Prophet was given up in 1898, there were over forty active members of the Labour Church Brotherhood. Unfortunately no records survive to tell of their later activities.

The Labour Church Brotherhood was an attempt to get middle class leadership for the Labour Church; but Trevor agreed with 'Nunquam's' criticism of the original plan. He published a letter with the following explanation:

> It is from Robert Blatchford. I asked him to criticise certain suggestions of mine for the promotion of education in connection with the Labour Church. What the suggestions were does not matter just now. I will only say that I heartily agree with Robert Blatchford's opinion.
>
> Dear Trevor:- Are you making a mistake, or do I misunderstand you? You speak of the educated teaching the uneducated; and of the strong serving the weak.
>
> Do you mean that the middle-class people are educated, and that the workers are uneducated? Do you think that the middle-class man is strong and the working man weak?
>
> The fact has always seemed to me to be that neither the university man nor the workman could be fully educated. They both are half educated. Which has the better half? I think a craftsman with a little schooling is better educated than a scholar with small experience of life and work. I think as a rule that the best kind of workman is stronger, and not weaker than the best kind of scholar; but don't confuse mere scholarship with high intellectual gifts. Don't pit my average better class workman against a Lord Macaulay or a Browning. Those must be matched with a Stephenson or a Franklin. . . . Send your educated friends to the people to learn as well as to teach. Send them to mix with the poor and exchange knowledge. That is what is wanted. Perhaps that is what you mean.[1]

---

1. Prophet, September, 1894, p. 117.

The Labour Church Settlement:

In 1902 Trevor moved to London, to a three roomed flat in a block of workmen's dwellings in the Clerkenwell district. Here regular settlement work was attempted. There was accommodation for meetings of up to forty members, with regular social evenings, etc. There is little record of the activities of this project. It is known that it was still functioning effectively in 1904, and that it was not listed by the Socialist Annual of 1907.

The Role of the Lecturers[1]:

The popularity, and indeed the very existence, of the Labour Churches depended on lecturers who travelled the country spreading the gospel of Socialism. Most of them were men and women who used their spare time to speak at nearby towns, asking only their travel expenses, but a few devoted their full time, and so required a fee as well. They spoke at public meetings, political demonstrations, Pleasant Sunday Afternoon gatherings, Labour clubs, and Labour Churches. It has been suggested that one of the motives in forming Labour congregations was to provide a better platform for them. Certainly the Churches and the lecturers were well suited to each other.

In the early days it was the fame and popularity of men like Tom Mann, Ben Tillett, and Keir Hardie which assured the success of the movement. Trevor testified to this fact:

> On the day when Robert Blatchford and Ben Tillett permitted me to announce them as speakers on the first programme of the Labour Church Services, the success of the movement was assured, though I knew it not. Since then I and the Labour Church have become

---

1. For a list of Lecturers, topics, and sample lectures, cf. Appendix, pp. 510 ff.


THE
CLARION-YATC
No 1
MARTYN MEMORIAL

> indebted to Labour leaders and members so that we are no longer our own but are, in a sense, of them. We shall be loyal to their cause.[1]

Nationally known speakers brought out the overflow crowds and gave the new Churches their initial boost. But it soon became evident that few of these speakers had the concerns of the Churches at heart; they were politicians first and foremost. The Churches were to many of them little more than Sunday conveniences. Through them they could reach a wider audience, and could feel less guilty of breaking the Sabbath if they spoke from a pulpit rather than from a political rostrum (though their message from either would be the same).

From 1893 to 1897 a Labour Church could fairly easily arrange for expensive lecturers. Transportation expenses and honouraria could be divided among a number of societies. But, by the end of the decade this fortuitous situation no longer existed. Mr. Sneyd, President and Lecture Secretary of the Hanley Labour Church reported to the 1899 Labour Church Union Conference that

> . . . two or three years ago they could fill up a week with a good speaker. He would be at the Labour Church on the Sunday, and would speak for different societies in neighbouring towns during the remainder of the week. For the last eighteen months this had been impossible, owing to the falling off of the local organisations in question. The consequence was that their expenses were now much heavier.[2]

Mr. Sneyd was not alone in his judgment; he was supported by several delegates. Mr. Gutteridge of Nottingham

> . . . agreed with previous speakers in regard to arrangements for week-evening lectures. There had been an exception, however, in the case of Enid Stacy. They had had her recently for a Sunday,

---

1. Prophet, April 1893, p. 29.
2. Labour Church Record, July 1899, p. 2.

> and had also booked her for five succeeding evenings in the neighbourhood. The result was that her visit had cost them only nine shillings instead of two pounds.[1]

The cost of the lecturers was always a problem for the Labour Churches. A few congregations found that it paid in the long run to get the best speakers regardless of cost, for larger crowds meant better collections. The majority, however, had to content themselves with lesser known personalities. Even though they found the expense burdensome, the lecturers were hardly the 'bloated paid agitators' the newspapers complained about. During 1898 Bruce Glasier and Fred Brocklehurst did charge thirty shillings plus transportation, which was considered very high. The previous year the average cost of a lecturer to the Halifax congregation, including transportation, was only seventeen shillings and six pence.[2] It would be hard to get rich on that income even when one slept and ate with one of the local comrades.

The lecturers represented a large number of viewpoints; they came from every variety of reform movement; all were welcome on Labour Church platforms. Some claimed that this was a sure way to prevent the Churches becoming narrow and doctrinaire[3], but others felt that the disadvantages outweighed the advantages. At the 1899 Conference

---

1. Labour Church Record, July 1899, p. 2.
2. Prophet, November, 1897. p. 135
3. In a paper on the development of Labour Church speakers, Mr. Sneyd said: ". . . we must try to finance our Churches more efficiently and . . . to develop amongst ourselves speakers who shall deliver our message of hope to the people. I know this is not an easy matter, because our Labour Church platform is so broad, embracing, as it does in practice, nearly every reform movement of our time. So we must, for some years to come at least, be largely dependent on help from those not directly connected with us. And this would be advantageous to us if we could cope with the expense entailed, for although many of these men and women charge nothing for their services, yet the travelling expenses are

Mr. Gutteridge reported that

> At Nottingham they had had a number of very clever speakers, who gave very excellent addresses on all sorts of subjects. But they never ended their addresses with pointing out to their hearers the nature of the work the Labour Church had to do, and gave no stirring appeal to the audience to join the Church and help forward its work.[1]

He also said that

> . . . they were a good deal puzzled with the multiplicity of the ideas of their speakers. On one Sunday they would have an orthodox speaker, and perhaps on the next an aggressive secularist. People went away wondering what the Labour Church stood for. He thought it would be an excellent thing if they could have some organisation to enable them to get speakers more in accordance with their principles.[1]

As the twentieth century advanced there was a change. The Lecture Secretaries became more discriminating, chosing either speakers with an accepted socialist approach or those of general cultural and educational messages. The vegitarians, anti-vivisectionists, and bi-metalists, etc., were not so frequently heard. However, one varying viewpoint, the secularist vs. the Christian, did continue to puzzle the public. No one know where the Labour Churches stood on this question.

<u>The Labour Churches and the I. L. P.</u>:

There were two factors dominant in the ideas which brought the Labour Churches into existence -- as indicated by their name. They

---

> often a burden. But their presence amongst us keeps us from getting narrowed down into a definite sectional movement, and thus develops the broad sympathy which seems to me to be one of our best traits, and one which we must cultivate to the fullest extent; for, depend upon it, no reform movement exists by itself, and if it tries to do so it is sure to fail, just as it is impossible for individual men and women to live a full life in isolation from their fellows. They can only develop their best in association with those of differing thought and intellectual perceptions, but all bound together by sympathy and work for the general well-being.

1. The <u>Labour Church Record</u>, July 1899, p. 5.
1. <u>Labour Church Record</u>, July 1899, p. 2.

were an

> . . . attempt to call into consciousness and to develop the Religious aspects of the Labour Movement,

and to help the movement become

> . . . non-material in its ultimate aim, self-sacrificing and generous in its spirit and its methods, and permeated with the consciousness that it is working out the decrees of the Supreme Power and helping men to realise the Supreme Love.[1]

In so far as they helped to develop this religious outlook they fulfilled one of the dreams of their founders, and were Churches. But integrally entwined with this religious emphasis was the practical desire to push forward the cause of Labour including the development of independent political and economic action.

The Labour Church, separate from the historic churches, was a result of the same milieu which produced a political party independent of the radicals and the liberals. It was natural then that it should be regarded by its members as well as its critics as an auxiliary -- a new regiment in the great Labour Army -- to work along with other units for the Emancipation of Labour. The accepted policy was co-operation and harmony.[2]

Trevor recognized from the very beginning that there was danger of the Labour Church losing one or other of these emphases and being therefore absorbed either into the historic churches or into the policical Labour Movement. In Manchester he saw that the Labour Church might consider itself to be the Labour

---

1. P. H. Wicksteed, in The Inquirer, as quoted in the Prophet, April 1893, p. 28.
2. "I would lend a Labour Church Band and give all the organized help possible to a Labour Demonstration in which the Labour Church had no acknowledged part, rather than, by stickling for recognition, cause jealousy and discord in our movement." -- Trevor in the Prophet April, 1893, p. 29.

Party and claim for itself independent political action, so, to preserve the religious emphasis of the Labour Church he proposed the formation of the Manchester Independent Labour Party,[1] with the accompanying explanation:

> The Labour Church is eager for political action -- the more the better. But it desires to enter the political arena as an auxiliary force, and not itself as a responsible political organisation.[2]

It was essential to the Labour Churches that, if they were to remain religious bodies, their sympathy and support for political

---

1. Cf. H. C. Herford, Philip Henry Wicksteed, pp. 225ff. H. A. Atkinson wrote H. V. Herford: "I think the 1893 conference in London, which floated the Independent Labour Party into a national movement, adopted the Manchester and Salford constitution as they certainly did the most distinctive part of it. Although Blatchford did the writing, much of the inspiration came from John Trevor. He it was who had the idea that the different elements in the movement towards Socialism in Manchester at that time should be got to work together. So we had two leading spirits from the Social Democratic Federation, Evans and Purvis, two from the Fabian Society, Settle and Dugdale, he and I, his assistant, from the Labour Church, and the great man of the day, Blatchford of the Clarion. I have not seen any evidence yet which weakens my belief that the starting of the Manchester, and Salford I. L. P. under such auspices and in such manner, was the true inauguration of the Third Party Movement and the beginning of the British I. L. P."
   A. M. Thompson, in the Manchester Guardian, Jan. 1, 1944, under the title "Robert Blatchford", makes reference to the above meeting: ". . . Yet it is a fact that he Robert Blatchford more than any other man, made the Labour Party. It was born in our one-roomed office in Manchester and christened on the following Sunday at a meeting in the Chorlton Town Hall. Within six months some sixty branches of what came to be known as "Blatchford's party" had been formed in Lancashire and Yorkshire. In January 1893, the party was officially launched at the Bradford Conference. Blatchford refused nomination for the presidency and Keir Hardie was elected."
2. Prophet, April 1893, p. 28; cf. also Prophet, April 1894, p. 41: "The Labour Party exists for the attainment of Things. The Labour Church exists for the attainment of Life, without which the attainment of Things will never avail for our well-being. The Labour Church is in danger of being too much immersed in the secularism and materialism necessarily and rightly attaching to a political movement.

parties should not lead them into subjecting themselves to mere political ends. That this often was the situation was true, particularly after the resolution passed in the summer of 1894 by the National Administrative Council of the I. L. P.:

> That branches of the I. L. P., wherever practicable, should run a Sunday meeting on Labour Church lines.[1]

In many communities this meant a complete indentification of Labour Church ideas with the local party and the gradual dilution of religious ideas till the "Sunday meetings on Labour Church lines" were merely political gatherings.

The problem of maintaining a Labour Church along side an I. L. P. local was that of maintaining a 'Witness of God in the Labour Movement' and, at the same time of not creating a wedge in the Labour Party. The fear that the latter might be happening was allayed by Keir Hardie's assurances that he could detect no such tendency. The real danger was rather that the 'witness' would not be given. Trevor warned against this deficiency:

> A tendency to political supremacy is being developed in the movement against which it is necessary to utter a friendly, but most earnest word of warning.[2]

A few months later he again editorialized about the

> . . . extreme narrowness of the Labour Party, and the growing difficulty, as it settles into organisation, of a generous breadth of mind being developed within it. . . . the I. L. P. must of necessity appear to be attempting the salvation of the world in an appallingly cheap fashion.[3]

He was referring to the adoption of political vote-catching techniques which left out of account "man's deeper needs and

---

1. Prophet, September 1894, p. 124.
2. Prophet, October 1894, p. 136.
3. Prophet, February 1895, p. 25.

higher aspirations". He called the Labour Churches -- and the Labour Church lecturers -- to remember the spiritual dimensions of the Labour Movement.

On many occasions Trevor suggested that it would be wiser for those whose aims rose no higher than the holding of propaganda meetings on Sunday to abandon their intentions of forming Labour Churches. In June 1895 came the specific advice to a Political party considering sponsoring a Labour Church: Appoint a committee to launch a Labour Church. From its very beginning, this committee should be a separate self-determining organization, for

> . . . it should be obvious that a political Party cannot -- as such, organize a real Church.[1]

To congregations already functioning he repeatedly warned:

> The Labour Churches are in danger of considering the I. L. P. their only sphere of operation.[2]

If the Labour Churches retain their independence they can work for the harmony which can unite the Trade Unionists, the I. L. P. and the S. D. F. into a National Labour Party; and they can keep the religious emphasis before the entire movement.[3] When the Leeds Labour Church were considering merging with the local I. L. P., the Labour Prophet followed Trevor's policy and strongly advised against it because of the loss of the Labour Church emphasis which would ensue.[4]

The leader of the I. L. P. valued the contribution of the

---

1. Prophet, June 1895, p. 88.
2. Prophet, July 1895, p. 104
3. Cf. Prophet, August and September 1895, pp. 120f & 137.
4. Cf. Prophet, March 1897, pp. 40f.

Labour Churches. R. A. Beckett reported an interview with Keir Hardie:

> "There is no doubt," said he, thoughtfully puffing his pipe, "that the Labour Church is a great feeder of Socialism."
> As leader of a Socialist political party, it seemed natural that he should seize on this aspect of the case. But he did not stope there.
> "Apart from that," he continued, "it seems to me to have a distinct value, especially as tending to keep the movement from sinking into sordid materialism." With characteristic generosity Keir Hardie added:
> "To do this successfully the Labour Church must preserve its independence. To identify it with any political party would be fatal." 1

The Labour Churches and Continental Socialism:

Continental socialists looked upon English socialism and the Labour Churches with curiosity. They followed the same kind of reaction as a Polish newspaper correspondent writing from London to Trevor, sometimes with more and sometimes with less sympathy for the Labour Church idea.

> I think that the Labour Church movement is a very characteristic product of the whole English Labour movement, and therefore I have given our readers many quotations from the Labour Prophet respecting the principles of the Labour Church. These quotations can give to our public a pretty fair idea of your teachings. At the same time I pointed out that the Labour Church could not, in my opinion, have any considerable influence on the masses. We foreigners think that the ónly way for social progress is the political one. We think also that all forces of Socialism in every country ought to be devoted to the party organisation. Moreover, I may be mistaken, but it seems to me that the weak

---

1. Prophet, June, 1897. p. 89 Hardie's concept of the relation of the I. L. P. to religious groups is indicated in the following statement from All About The I. L. P., an I. L. P. pamphlet based on an earlier one written by Hardie: "Socialism takes no note of a man's religious opinions. Whether he be Roman Catholic, Anglican, Non-conformist, Mohamedan, Buddhist, or Pagan, is his own concern, and one with which Socialism does not interfere. It is universally acknowledged that Liberalism and Conservatism are things quite apart from, and entirely independent of, a man's religious opinions. So, too, with Socialism. It seeks to deal with those matters of human interest which can be seen, felt, and handled, and does not directly or indirectly, interpose itself in any way between a man and the form of religious belief which he feels to be best for him.

side of the English movement is too much of the so-called 'Idealism' and too much of 'Missionaryism' -- and the Labour Church seems to me to be the strongest expression of this 'Missionary Idealism'. I think, also, that the English movement is too expansive; for example, I cannot see the usefulness of "Women's Letters" and "Children's Corners" at the present state of Socialist forces in this country. An energetic agitation among the women of East London during the recent 'water famine' would have done more than all 'Woman Letters' in a whole yearly issue of every English Socialist paper. And the Labour Church seems to be the most prominent specimen of this expansiveness of the English Labour movement, an expansiveness which is the contrary of the concentration of all fighting forces.[1]

Albert Mètin toured the British Isles after the International Congress of 1896. He reported:

> The liberalism and tolerance of the English Socialists are such as I have never encountered in France. Perhaps they are a trifle too sentimental, a little too religious; this leads them sometimes to seek very complicated reasons for acts which fraternity and justice would explain easily enough. But their religion is a purely personal sentiment which makes itself respected. Personally, I could get on perfectly with your Christian Socialists, and though myself a Positivist, it was with pleasure that I saw the Labour Church representatives admitted to the Congress. If we, on the Continent, are obliged to fight the Christian Socialists, it is not because they are religious, but because they are Catholics and are seeking to establish the tyranny of the Roman Clergy with the Pope at their head.[2]

<u>The Labour Church Idea in Other Groups</u>:[3]

The ideas which gave rise to the Labour Churches found expression in many other societies and organizations. A few of these, like the

---

1. <u>Prophet</u>, March 1896, p. 41.
2. *Prophet, December 1896, p. 193*
3. When this Thesis was first envisaged the intention was to give a few pages to each of these groups, noting their similarities to, and differences from, the Labour Churches. However, so much material has been found that it has been necessary to reduce this section to a brief note, and to append a list of such groups (See Appendix, pp 739ff) The list does not claim to be complete; its purpose is only to give evidence of the extent and variety of organizations which to a greater or lesser degree tried to combine religious and socialistic (reform) ideas.

Brotherhood Churches, or the more socially minded of the Ethical Societies were almost indistinguishable from Labour congregations, while others such as the Order of the Golden Age, or the Knights of Columbus had distinctive emphases which set them apart. All of them had this in common: they were dissatisfied with society and felt the need of reforming it in accord with religious principles of Brotherhood and Justice. Their multiplicity indicates the variety of proposals put forward as the basis of reforming social life.

Life is onward -- use it
With a forward aim;
Toil is heavenly -- choose it,
And its welfare claim.

Look not to another
To perform your will;
Let not your own brother
Keep your warm hand still.

Life is onward -- prize it,
Sunelit, or in storm;
Oh, do not despise it
In its humblest form.

Life is onward -- heed it
In each varied dress;
Your own act can speed it
On to happiness.

His bright pinion o'er you
Time waves not in vain,
If Hope chant before you
Her prophetic strain.

Life is onward -- use it
With a forward aim;
Toil is heavenly -- choose it,
And its welfare claim.

-- L.C. Hymn Book No. 35

CHAPTER V

THE IDEA EXPOUNDED

The Importance of the Individual in the Labour Church Idea:

The program of the Labour Churches was bipolar. There was the widespread recognition that the religion of the Labour Movement, if an organization distinct from Church or Chapel were to be justified, must be 'practical': it must deal not only with the symptoms of a troubled society and with the human victims of 'commercial slavery', but must also remedy the causes of such troubles; it looked to Socialism as the Divinely chosen path of evolution which would lead to the perfect human society. The other pole, which was not so widely recognized but which was repeatedly stressed by Trevor and the few others who shared his ideal, was the development of a vital personal religion which would provide the dynamic force for all social reform. While the first pole was socialistic (or should we say collectivist) the second was personal and to a degree individualistic.

Trevor's editorials in the Labour Prophet are full of references to "Life", "Life with God", "human co-operation with Divine Evolution" and "a sweet hidden friendship with God", but all of these are vague phrases, perhaps deliberately chosen so, for Trevor refused to have any part with anything that might appear to be dogmatic. Though he might offer to be a guide pointing out some of the signposts of

---

1. Cf. Prophet, June 1896, p. 93: "There is one sense in which the way of life is narrow. It is personal, lonely, intensely individual. I see no tendency for the inner life of man to become collective. With a growing Collectivism in regard to the means of life, the safeguard of freedom will lie more and more in the pronounced Individualism of life itself."
Prophet, July 1895, p. 105: "The worth of an individual soul, and the work it can accomplish — this we have not begun to realise."

FROM THE HILLS.

CIRCLES OF LIFE.

I.—Freedom.

1. Would you know God?—Know Yourself:
Would you know Yourself?—Be Yqurself:
This, Life has taught me.

2. Would you serve God?—Serve Man:
Would you serve Man?—Be a Man:
This, also, have I learned.

3. To be a Man is to be Free:
To be Free is to be Divine:
This, too, have I discovered.

4. Would you be Free?—Act freely:
Would you act freely?—Act truly:
This is the Inner Circle of Life.

II.—Service.

1. Would you know God?—Learn of God:
Would you learn of God?—Learn of Life:
This, Life has taught me.

2. Would you serve God?—Know Man:
Would you know Man?—Share with Man your Life:
This, also, have I learned.

3. To know Man is to love Man:
To love Man is to be Divine:
This, too, have I discovered.

4. Would you love Man?—Give Man Freedom
Would you give Man Freedom?—Give him Yourself
This is the Outer Circle of Life.

III.—Freedom and Service.

1. There are these two—Freedom and Service:
They are equals, and have no equal:
Their union is Life and God;
Their severance, Bondage and Death.

2. To be Yourself and to serve Man—
To be Free and to give Freedom—
This is to know God;
This is to be Divine.

J. T.

life's highways, he consistently refused to be a commander giving orders to others. He would not even suggest to anyone to follow where he had gone or to go in any direction just because he had pointed the way. Each must follow the path of his own self development. The very individuality of religious experience which Trevor cultivated made his mission a most difficult task, for he could not dogmatize even about the most primary ideas. The Labour Churches agreed with him in this aversion to anything that might appear to be creedal, doctrinal, conventional, or traditional; we cannot say they followed Trevor, rather, his appeal found a ready response. This was a characteristic which was prior to, rather than a result of, anything Trevor wrote or said.

In a brief statement written in tribute to the work of Keir Hardie on behalf of the unemployed, Trevor strikes this theme which was always present, though not always dominantly so:

> The Individual is still needed -- the man who, though he draw his mandate from the people, yet draws a higher mandate from a higher source. A party that cannot put to the front a few strong, earnest, steadfast souls, and trust them there, will never do any good work.[1]

Socialism was accepted as the means of salvation for society; but Labour Church members could not accept 'collectivism' as an adequate philosophy of life. They recognized a need for personal character.

Often these two tendencies were in controversy: The dilemma of a correspondent who called himself "Socius" is a typical example. His parents were "no better and no worse than hundreds of other men and women"; they swore when in a passion and they lied when it was convenient, and so did he. When he went to work in a factory he

---

1. Prophet, March 1895, p. 40.

found that the worker who

> . . . doesn't tell lies, and swear, and push himself on, regardless of who has to be pushed off, is an oddity, and is sneered and jeered at by his fellow workmen.[1]

But then he had been converted to Socialism, largely by Blatchford in the Sunday Chronicle, and later in the Clarion. Of his conversion he wrote:

> When a man really becomes a Socialist, the result to him is to make him more manly and honest, gentle and just in his dealings with his fellow man. He begins to look upon his wife as an equal, nay, as something divine, superior, to be loved and helped. He begins to like books, to read and think for himself. . . . in material things he knows what he needs and how best they may be obtained.[1]

He then went on to describe how the Labour Church came to give him a new vision of Life at its highest and best. The Socialist, realising this, then

> . . . determines to live, to look at the heavens with full, clear eyes; but this is by no means easy if he will be genuine, and not a hypocrite. For years his eyes have been full of mud, and he finds it hard to keep them clear.[1]

When things go wrong he swears, he gets in a passion, and he "takes it out" on those at home. In the factory he lies to cover up for fellow workmen that they will not be thrown out on the street, out of work. (This he feels he has to do, because, as a Socialist, their problems are his own.) But his conscience bothers him for he has told a lie; he stays away from the Labour Church for he cannot be both honest and merciful toward his brethren at the same time. He is in a moral quandary, and feels he is not alone:

> Thousands of men want to join the Labour Church, but they want to be genuine. Can they be helped, or will they have to wait until the present thrice-accursed competitive state of society is abolished?[1]

---

1. Prophet, May 1894, p.53.

Trevor, carefully avoiding anything that might be construed as advising a specific solution to the problem, suggested a meticulous rethinking of the situation, with the faith that true knowledge of and dependence on God's moral law would end the dilemma.

A reply from "Socius" the next month indicated that Trevor had helped him face the real problem and that he was winning through to the concept of Socialism so well described by a letter from C. Allen Clarke (Teddy Ashton)

> And now, "Socius" my friend, . . . If you are a Socialist, you and I are fighting against evil. And, therefore, every time we tell a lie, or do a wrong (even for what we call expediency's sake), we go over to the enemy, and are retarding the cause, though we may not think it. Wherefore let us be men, and keep our faith though we perish; for a base life is a worse thing than death.[1]

In this implied identity of true individual morality with the Socialist concept of society we have the ideal toward which the more religious minded in the Labour Churches tried to move.

In 1896 Trevor published an article written two years previously:

> I am a Socialist, but with the spread of Socialism we need to insist more than ever upon the worth of the Individual Life. It is for Socialists, I write, and to further the cause of Socialism; but it must be Socialism of a very roomy sort. . . .
> Socialism will be of no service to men and women who have not themselves learned to live. Do you think that the re-organisation of society is going to make it easy to master the Art of Living? You do not understand human nature, then. No! . . . To make yourself a true man, a true woman, whose presence is like sunshine on a winter's day! -- Think of it! -- If we could but do this, would it not be indeed to live![2]

Trevor then went on to make an eloquent plea to Socialists to undertake only that amount of work they could do efficiently and joyfully

---

1. Prophet, June, 1894, p. 77.
2. Prophet, December, 1896, p. 191.

and not to burden life with a crushing load of responsibility that takes all contagious joy out of service and reduces Socialism to a gloomy economic theory and hard dutiful work. The real work of Socialism must be the winning of people to socialist ways of thought, and this will be more by spontaneous joy than by anything else. The work of Hugh Holmes Gore, a Bristol Lawyer, was close to the Labour Church ideal:

> I am firmly convinced it is greater to have infused into even five boys the spirit of Human Brotherhood than to win a seat in the name of Socialism in the Imperial Legislature. . . . I would suggest that if we spent more time in showing individuals how to travel the road it would not be amiss; it would, indeed, be less ostentatious, but as useful a work as most of Socialists are engaged in at present.[1]

Robert Morley of Halifax had also caught this ideal, and was a bit disillusioned about its expression in the congregational life:

> . . . to me the weakness of the Labour Church appears to be the incapacity of so many to discern the great necessity for personal purity and self-sacrifice.[2]

In maintaining this emphasis the Labour Churches did yeoman service for the Labour Movement as a whole.

The Temperance Question:

In March 1893 Trevor opened the pages of the Labour Prophet to letters concerning "Drink in Labour Clubs". A very small proportion of the numerous letters were in favour, and fewer yet were from fanatical abstainers. Most were calmly reasoned statements of the advisability of maintaining Labour Clubs as places of discussion and recreation free from the adverse influences of 'drink'. It was generally felt that public houses provided quite adequately

---

1. *Prophet*, May 1895, p. 66.
2. *Prophet*.

for those who wished to have their glass. On the other hand the actual experience of the Labour Clubs was that, as the years passed, they began to adopt the sale of alcoholic beverages. I believe it to be a safe assumption that the majority of those associated with Labour Churches were opposed to the sale of beer or strong drink in Labour Clubs. A good proportion of Labour Church supporters were advocates of total abstinence. It must be stated that an equally large proportion were not and perhaps the majority were indifferent to the question. To my knowledge the temperance question never became a divisive issue in any Labour Church congregation though it was often discussed throughout the whole period of the existence of Labour Churches.[1] Its importance as a subject of discussion probably diminished as the years went by.

Special "Rites":

The question of "Baptism", "Burial" and "Marriage" was first raised very early in the life of the Labour Churches, but nothing very specific was done at any time. So far as most congregations were concerned there was nothing 'sacramental' about such events; they were to be simply ceremonies of recognition which many congregations avoided as far as possible.

Dedication of Children: In November 1895, H. C. Rowe reported, concerning a visit to Manchester and Salford:

---

1. The view was often expressed that drink was more frequently an effect than a cause of poverty. Cf. Rev. John Glasse in an I. L. P. pamphlet The Relation of the Church to Socialism (1900) p. 23. Though not a Labour Church publication this pamphlet does express ideas congenial to Labour Church congregations.

> One of the last events which distinguished our stay at the Institute in St. John's Parade was the reception of several children into the fellowship of the Labour Church. The request came as a surprise, and there was no announcement beforehand, so that proceedings were decidedly informal. Mr. H. V. Herford drew up a simple but effective service, which was carried through with dignity and impressiveness. Of course, a baby cried. They always do that on such occasions.[1]

The next such Dedication within a Labour Church comes from Leeds.[2] R. A. Beckett reported in the December Labour Prophet:

> At the evening service there was an interesting ceremony equivalent to the orthodox baptism. The parents who had been sitting near the platform, rose at a given moment and handed their baby girl (who gazed around wonderingly) into the arms of the President, T. B. Duncan. He announced the name that had been given her, and in a few well-chosen sentences expressed the hopes which the parents cherished for their child in relation to the larger issues of the future. Unlike an ordinary baptism, the whole thing was dignified, simple, and to the point. [3]

In 1902 someone wrote to the Labour Church Union, asking about the legal status of a Labour Church baptism in relation to application for certain bank and Civil Service posts where 'Baptismal Certificates' were required. D. B. Foster, then President of the Labour Church Union, replying to the letter in a Labour Church column in the Clarion made the following points:

1. Heretical groups must expect a considerable time to elapse before their practices are legitimatized, and until this happens, must expect to be persecuted. 2. The Labour Church must clarify its relationship to Christianity; so far as he understood the situation the Labour Churches did not accept the authority of the

---

1. Prophet, November 1895. p.175
2. Cf. Appendix, p.416, for an account of the first Leeds 'Baptism'. For an account of an open air service at Wallasey, Liverpool, in which a child was ". . . dedicated to the Socialist Movement" see the Labour Leader, May 29th, 1897.
3. Prophet, Dec. 1897, p. 140.

Church or of the Christ, but were Christian only in so far as they accepted the necessity of emphasizing the Christ-like spirit. Thus, as free religionists, the Labour Church could not make its practices conform to usual Christian usage, just for convention's sake.[1]

When the Labour Church Hymn Book was revised, a Baptismal Hymn, No. 164, was included. So far as the present researches have been able to throw light on this question, this was as far as the Union proceeded in the direction of a ceremonial form. The matter was left to local decision; many congregations held dedication services regularly, while in other areas this was left to the Sunday School. In the twentieth century it was the Socialist Sunday Schools that developed a socialist ritual:

THE WELCOMING AND NAMING OF A CHILD[2]

(The parents and immediate friends of the child should sit in the seats nearest the Conductor of the service. Instrumental music might be played at the beginning and end, but the selections should be somewhat short, and of the quieter order of music, as befitting the presence of the central figure.of the ceremony, namely a shall child. No solos should be sung.)

1. Song sung by all the assembly.

2. Conductor speaks:- Neighbours, friends, and fellow-citizens, we assemble here to-day in order to give loving and respectful greeting to the most beautiful symbol of humanity's progress and future -- a little child. The life of our race is three-fold -- past, present, and future. The past is, in truth, a living past. The record revealed in history is the record of forefathers and foremothers who laboured and suffered, who struggled and hoped, and who have not vanished forever. Their work remains in our civilisation. The very language we speak was given to us by our ancestors. To them we owe our flesh and blood. We are the very spirit and heart of their existence and time, renewed in a generation which we call the present.

---

1. Cf. Clarion, Oct. 3, 1902.
2. R. W. Sorenson, M.P. reports that this was a solemn occasion. Often a silver spoon, engraved with the child's name, was presented. This naming service was often in place of Baptism, but it did not necessarily conflict with or displace the Christian rite as administered by Church or Chapel.

In like manner we are the begetters and creators of the age yet to come. Is not that a reason -- the best of all reasons -- why we should each contribute our service, each co-operate, and each try to improve both himself and the world?

All are architects of fate,
  Working in these walls of time;
Some with massive deed and great,
  Some with ornaments of rhyme.

Nothing useless is, or low,
  Each thing in its place is best:
And what seems but idle show
  Strengthens and supports the rest.

For the structure that we raise
  Time is with materials filled;
Our to-days and yesterdays
  Are the blocks with which we build.

Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
  With a firm and ample base;
And ascending and secure
  Shall to-morrow find its place.

-- Longfellow

This child, brought here by its parents and kinsfolk and friends, is a representative of the morrow, of humanity's capacity to pass from the old to the new, from the good to the better. We who are gathered about it in affection, therefore, do not merely regard it as a happy addition to a family, but above and beyond that, we salute it as an emblem of the hope, the faith, and the forward looking courage of humanity at large. We meet in this public manner in order to testify our conviction that every child born to our race, of whatever nation or colour, should be honoured as a new member of Humanity. It has been nobly said that "The whole succession of men during the ages should be considered as One Man, ever living and ever learning." This child we look upon as a cherished part of that One Man of All the Ages.

As spokesman of the community, I ask by what name you wish this child to be known.

(A parent or kinsman recites the name or names, and hands the child to the Conductor who says, while all the company stand:)

On behalf of all this company present, and of society generally, I welcome this child, (repeat full name), into the membership of the human family, and express a heartfelt desire that its life may be blessed with health and joy, and that it may render service, in a humble sphere or in the public sphere, to the social commonwealth, its fellowship, its order, and its progress.

(The child is handed back.)

To you, parents and kinsfolk, I put the question before all this assembly: Do you promise that, so far as in you lies, you will train this child, and cause it to be trained, for a career of self-respect and self-reverence, and service to mankind?

(Parents etc.:- We promise.)

3. Song: "Hail to thee, hail to thee, child of humanity", or any other suitable selection.

(The company resume their seats.)

The joyous and homely ceremony we have just collectively performed should act as a reminder to us of our relation and our duty towards all the children born into human society, and especially in our immediate environment. The Romans had a saying that "The greatest reverence is due to a child." It is our part not only to show love and good-natured favour to children, but unfailing respect. With due allowance for the young soul's limitations and inexperience, we should, in effect, show as genuine respect to a child as to an adult. Disrespect evinced towards these little ones is, at bottom, disrespect to the supreme humanity of which we are all the offspring. Let us therefore honour the young and immature life by providing it with the best material comforts and aids, and the most efficient and humane education for which the city and the nation possess the means. No social and civic energy and wit are so well laid out as the energy and wit applied to the training of the feeling, reason and character of our young citizens. Here and now, therefore, we combine the gladness of a welcome to this child and young neighbour, with an acknowledged public and solemn obligation towards all its sisters and brothers in the community at large.

(The proceedings may close with instrumental music.)

-- F. J. Gould.[1]

The ceremonial or ritual varied with each Sunday School. Frequently sentimental frills were added:

> Curiosity, mingled with a peculiar air of reverence -- for childhood inspires reverence -- was manifest upon the faces of all present. The Socialist movement is establishing its ritual. The sacrament was one of fellowship, and its high priests were comrades, and from this will the movement derive strength and intensity.

The platform was tastefully adorned with narcissus and tulips,

---

1. Socialist Sunday Schools -- A Manual, Chap. 9, pp. 97ff.

amid which sat the mother and child, surrounded by human dainty flowers of tender age. The service opened with a choral song, and was continued by a little girl sweetly reciting "Only a Baby." Songs of tender poetry and innocence were afterwards rendered by the children's choir, and the fibres of emotion stirred gently at the call of this holy simplicity. Comrade W. G. Chapman, of Pankhurst Hall, performed the actual ceremony. In a short address of welcome to the "little Comrade," he enjoined upon all Comrades the responsibility for its welfare; then taking the baby in his arms, he kissed it, and gave it a name. In committing the child to the care of its mother, he described the duties of motherhood as the highest and best which falls to the lot of humanity.

> At this juncture the presentation of a bouquet of flowers to the mother and child by two children was both pretty and appropriate. The mother then distributed to the children the flowers which had adorned the platform, and after the choir had rendered some playful baby songs the service was brought to a close. It was simple and beautiful.[1]
>
> At Bridgeton S. S. S. the babies and mothers were accompanied by six little girls, who after the babies had been named the six then placed a flower each on the babies breasts. The superintendent presented each baby with a silver loving cup, a suitable inscription engraved on them.[2]
>
> As each child was named at Dennistoun S. S. S. their comrades, the scholars, welcomed them with the simple yet striking sentence: "Our comrade brother, our comrade sister, we welcome thee."[3]

Marriage: Beckett reported in the Prophet, December 1897 that Leeds Labour Church was the only one legally registered for the solemnization of matrimony. Halifax had considered this step in 1894[4], but whether or not it was done the present writer is unaware.

The Socialist Sunday School developed a ritual for Socialist Marriages:

---

1. The Young Socialist, p. 419, March 1909; report from Rochdale.
2. Ibid, June 1909, p. 475
3. Ibid, Sept. 1909, p. 543.
4. Prophet, Sept. 1894, p. 127

A MARRIAGE SERVICE[1]

(The service is prefaced by notes of guidance that the service may comply with the legal requirements of England, Wales, and Scotland.)

We are gathered together here, in a circle of friendship, to witness the joining of two lives, A..... B..... and C..... D..... are here to take each others hand in the spirit of affection and honour, and to say before us (parents, brothers, sisters, and acquaintances) that they will henceforward live under the same roof, smile at the same pleasures, grieve over the same trials, face the same temptations, combine in mutual duty, and contribute a joint help to the life of the community. And the ceremony that we here perform is not a subject of interest to themselves alone. It has a meaning for each of us who support them by our presence. Their marriage is the affirmation of a principle which is the very life and health of humanity. The love which marriage expresses is the only bond of true union among the members of the great human family. When the churches say "God is love"; when the Christian teacher says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren"; when Marcus Aurelius, the Stoic says, "We are made for co-operation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids"; and when man and woman, in openness and sincerity, declare their affection one for the other, their voices utter, in differing words, the central truth that love is the only principle upon which society can stably rest. And that is why we, by our very presence here, are witnesses, not only of a legal form, but to the importance of an essential truth.

They who have eyes for the sin of the world rather than for its grace are quick to perceive the evils that darken every day -- envy, hatred, jealousy, uncharitableness, painful competition, and war among men, classes and nations. They do not see that these are but the diseases which invade, but never master, the heart of humanity. Love is stronger than hatred, and the hand that presses in kindness is stronger than the hand that smites in scorn. The most powerful things in the world are the things that men reverence. Men reverence motherhood, fatherhood, childhood, friendship, pity, mutual love; and therefore motherhood, fatherhood, childhood, friendship, pity, and mutual love are the forces that ultimately triumph. Love is a kind of courage, and, in the hearts of the man and woman who here will wed, there is a silent, though unconscious, daring. For love stirs their life into a high resolution which

---

1. Reg. Gosling of Islington, Director of Co-op. Wholesale Society had a Socialist Service to recognize his marriage. He was Sec. of the Islington S. S. S. (information from Mr. Simmonds, near Manchester.)

steps into the midst of tasks, difficulties, sorrows, and darkness; and it pits the force of affection against the force of selfishness. They who wed tread the new road in faith, believing that their mutual tenderness will endow them with power to conquer.

And all men and women respect this spirit which utters itself in marriage. Even those who have failed to realise love in their own marriage will always regard, with a softened heart, the wedding of young lives. Whether happy or disappointed, we all recognise the hope that lies in love; and we know that love is the virtue that heals. The saddest soul is ready to come from the shadow when it hears the marriage song, and smile its blessing and wave its hand in goodwill.

But the noblest office of love is not to heal. Its noblest office is to create, to build, to renew. And though it bends with equal willingness over the sick bed and the cradle, yet it fulfils its function more finely in renewing the world's life than in comforting the world in pain and decay. Painters delight to portray Mary as the Mother of Consolation, but more often as the Madonna caressing the joyous child. Hence love should be the active principle of three great institutions -- the Family, the City, and the Nation; and through these institutions it constructs, provides for, and defends the life of humanity. It makes the family a true society; and the table at which parents and children sit in mutual regard and consideration is the high altar, and the daily meal the sacrament. The city, which is too often a mere crowd of voters, will be made more and more into a republic of kindred souls and companions, as the spirit of the family penetrates our municipal life. And the nation will grow into a purer political wisdom as it becomes more inspired with the family ideal and pays homage rather to social love than to the prosperity of the market or the exploits of the soldier.

Thus, then, our assembly here is made significant by reminding us of a principle that affects the universal life of humanity. Because the principle is sacred, we invest it with serious form, and, in the name of the community, ask bride and bridegroom to speak, in trust towards each other, and in loyalty to the social life of which they form a part, and each in turn, to repeat these declarations:-

I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I A..... B..... may not be joined in matrimony to C..... D.....

I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I C..... D..... may not be joined in matrimony to A..... B.....

(And the second declaration, hand in hand)

I call upon these persons here present to witness that I A..... B..... take thee C..... D..... to be my lawful wedded wife.

I call upon these persons here present to witness that I C..... D..... take thee A..... B..... to be my lawful wedded husband.

(The Bridegroom places the ring on the Bride's finger.)

And this ring, given and received, is a token of that golden rule which is binding on husband and wife, as upon all men, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them."

(Bride and Bridegroom sit.)

To A..... and C..... B..... (the married names) we offer our heartfelt assurances of good wishes and hope.

It is only those who do not understand the meaning of human life who count, as vain and formal, the wishes we have just expressed. They will tell us that while the wish speaks of peace and perfection, the reality slowly spells out its tale of sorrow and defeat. Now, if sorrow and defeat were the chief sequel to human hope, hope itself would die; and human lips would utter no more expressions of congratulation. But our hearts are sometimes wiser than our heads; and, undaunted by the record of sorrows, they beat in glad anticipation of the future. And the instinct is sound; it tells of our inner conviction that love is not destined to yield in the struggle against unreason and passion.

These very wishes of ours show that we believe the newly-wedded man and wife have in themselves the capacity to build up a household in gracious union and purpose. We do not advise them as to their duties and responsibilities, for, as Paul has finely said, "Love is the fulfilling of the law". And when husband and wife co-operate in heart, their hands will learn the co-operation of the daily routine in due time and measure.

We therefore call upon the new-made man and wife, not to obey a code of domestic law, but to keep true to that fresh sentiment of mutual regard which brings them here today in happy pledge. To ourselves, not less than to them, we say:-

Think truly, and thy thought
  Shall the world's famine feed;
Speak truly, and each word of thine
  Shall be a fruitful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
  A great and noble creed.
-- Horatius Bonar.

And so we stand with the newly-wed on the threshhold of their

> home, glad with their gladness, hopeful with their hope, and trusting that we who pass their way, from time to time, or hear tidings of their work and health, may always be able to say: It is well.
>
> (Note:- It need hardly be pointed out that the Reader can omit passages in this address if greater brevity is desired.) [1]

Burial: The Labour Church congregations had not been in existence very long when they were called upon to comfort their members in time of trouble and sorrow, and particularly in time of bereavement. The record of the first Labour Church funeral service is given by Trevor, who had been asked to officiate for the late S. D. F. Comrade John Smith of Salford:

> On that occasion we did not go to the cemetry chapel, but the body was carried at once to the grave and lowered into it. Then I said a few words and called on Comrades Settle, and Horrocks to speak, as arranged beforehand. A few more words from myself, ending with some lines from Whittier's poem "The Eternal Goodness", and then a short prayer completed the service. From what was said to me afterwards, I believe the simplicity of the whole thing was much appreciated by those present. Surely, we can scarcely go too far on these solemn occasions in the avoidance of all professionalism and conventionality and in being simple, brief, and natural in our utterances.[2]

Only a few weeks after the burial of John Smith, a very prominent Socialist, George Evans, died; the services were conducted by the Labour Church, in part following the Burial Service of the Order of the Sons of Temperance. The banners of the Labour Church and the S. D. F., and the Labour Church band led a long procession. Fred Brocklehurst presided, with Robert Blatchford, William Horrocks, and R. Shaw taking part. Trevor was ill and could not be present, so wrote a few lines to be read, which indicate the tone of the 'few words' suggested for such services. After a fitting eulogy of the departed, Trevor concluded:

---

1. Socialist Sunday Schools -- A Manual, Chap. 9, pp. 97ff.
2. Prophet, May 1893, p. 39.

Hymn Used at Labour Church Funeral Services.

It singeth low in every heart,
We hear it each and all, --
A song of those who answer not,
However we may call.
They throng the silence of the breast;
We see them as of you, --
The kind, the true, the brave, the sweet
Who walk with us no more.

'Tis hard to take the burden up
When these have laid it down
They brightened all the joy of life,
They softened every frown.
But, oh! 'tis good to think of them
When we are troubled sore;
Thanks be to God that such have been,
Although they are no more.

More homelike seems the vast unknown
Since they have entered there;
To follow them were not so hard
Wherever they may fare.
They cannot be where God is not,
On any sea or shore;
Whate'er betides, Thy love abides
Our God for evermore!

-- John W. Chadwick
L.C. Hymn Book No. 70

> Farewell, good Comrade! We thank God for sending you to us. We leave you now in His hands, assured that you will suffer no ill. We will try to be more like you. God Bless you, dear old friend, and the work you have done among us; and make it fruitful in the hearts and homes of thousands in our land. [1]

Bye-and-large the problem of officiating at funerals didn't seriously confront the congregations till the beginning of the twentieth century. In response to a questionaire sent out in 1894 Leeds replied that they were drawing up an order of service; Hull reported that they "have not begun to die yet!" But it was during these early years that the pattern was set which was followed later.

When the first Mrs. Trevor was being laid to rest in the Manchester Crematorium, Keir Hardie, Robert Blatchford, Margaret McMillan, and Philip Wicksteed were called upon to lead the many friends and members of the Manchester and Salford Labour Church in an eloquent service of memorial and worship. For those of less prominence, if the local Labour people were reticent and did not wish to conduct a service, a sympathetic non-conformist clergyman would be asked to officiate.

Trevor's message to those who must face death was full of confidence in the face of mystery:

> I think I know that Life and Death are one -- not the mad fever we call life, nor the foul corruption we name death, but the Reality beneath both, by having our part in which alone we live. . . . One day, one night, your name will be the next on the endless roll.
> You will be quiet. You will offer no resistance.
> Only <u>live</u> now, and you will not be harmed or afraid.[2]

However, we must remember that Trevor's ideas were not necessarily those of the various congregations. In such a loose organization as

---

1. <u>Prophet</u>, ~~April~~ May 1893, p. 36. Respecting arrangements for the procession and the service, see the <u>Clarion</u>, April 8, 1893, p. 4.
2. <u>Prophet</u>, October, 1892. p. 76.

the Labour Churches, where doctrine was the rejection of all creed, and where government was almost fanatically democratic, it is difficult to make any generalities. Customs varied according to locale and personnel involved. But the desire for some direction brought the subject up again and again at Labour Church Union Conferences, with repeated requests that some specific form be adopted. The only surviving order is one submitted to the congregations prior to the 1907 Conference. Apparently this was approved, but was not published till 1909.

Burial Service[1]
SUGGESTED ORDER OF SERVICE
IF CONDUCTED ENTIRELY BY THE LABOUR CHURCH

On the demise of a member, on receipt of a request from the relative or relatives that the funeral should be conducted in accordance with the Labour Church service provided, the Secretary shall call a meeting of the Executive, one of the relatives being invited to attend. Representatives shall be appointed to attend the funeral, and a person chosen by the relative to make a few remarks in the Chapel of the Cemetry, or Crematorium or at the graveside. The wishes of the relatives with respect to flowers, mourning, coaches, etc., shall be ascertained and carried out as far as circumstances permit.

In the Chapel or at the graveside:-

1. Sing an appropriate hymn from the Labour Church Hymn Book, "See behind the Crimson West".

2. Read portions of Chapter XCI, Message of Man:

Verses 1 to 7: I have seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood and at first it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven as a lamb fleece; but when a ruder breath had dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirements, it began to put on darkness, and to decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age. It bowed the head and broke its stock, and at night, having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces.

The same is the portion of every man and every woman. (-- J.

---

1. A copy of this service is preserved in the Birmingham Minute Book.

Taylor.)

For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away. (-- I Peter 1:24)

Man that is born of woman hath but a short time to live and is full of misery. He cometh up and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth and never continueth in one stay. (--Common Prayer)

The days of our age are three score years and ten, and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow: so soon it passeth away and we are gone. (-- Psalm XC:10)

Verses 16 to 18: Do not despise death, but be well content with it. Since this too is one of those things which nature wills.

For such as it is to be, and to grow old and to increase and to reach maturity, and to have teeth and beard and grey hairs, and to beget and bring forth and all other natural operations which the seasons of thy life bring, such also is dissolution. This then is consistent with the character of a reflecting man to be neither careless nor impatient nor contemptuous with respect of death, but to wait for it as one of the processes of nature. (-- M. Aurelius)

Verses 22 to 26: The freeman thinks of nothing so little as of death, and his wisdom is a meditation not of death, but of life. (--Spinoza)

That love of action which would put death out of sight is to be counted good, as a holy and healthy thing, necessary to the life of men, serving to knit them together and to advance them in the right. (-- W. K. Clifford)

Be thou in readiness; so lead thy life that death may never find thee unprepared.

When that last hour shall come thou wilt have a far different opinion of thy whole life that is past, and be exceedingly sorry thou hast been so careless and remiss. (-- T. A. Kempis)

Verses 29 to 32: Let a man be of good cheer about his soul, who has cast away the pleasures and ornaments of the body as alien to him, and has followed after the pleasures of knowledge in this life, who has adorned the soul in her proper jewels which are temperance, and justice, and courage, and nobility, and truth. (-- Plato)

Let me dies the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his. (-- Numbers XXIII:10)

He has outsoared the shadow of our night,
Envy and calumny and hate and pain
And that unrest which men miscall delight
Can touch him not, and torture not again.
(-- Shelly)

3. Short address by chosen person, expressing the sentiments of the Labour Church.

4. Hymn

5. After lowering the body, read:- Friends and comrades -- we commit the body of our departed friend to earth from which it came. Our friend himself lives one, in our minds an abiding influence to urge us to renewed effort in humanity's cause. He having departed, yet remains a power for good in the lives of his (children) friends, and fellow members. May this occasion impress on our minds the futility of self-seeking in any form. We possess our life as a part of the common life of humanity. It is a trust we are called upon to faithfully discharge. While it is human to mourn the loss of our dear friend, we bow our heads in submission to the inevitable which each must face in his turn. He has played his part, and may his memory remain green to purify us from ignoble thoughts or desires. We are reminded that our individual life is not an end in itself but forms a part of the building up of the future race. May we at this moment renew our vows as comrades of the Labour Church and the great socialist cause to let the light of our common faith shine brightly that it may attract men and women into one great bond of brotherhood.

(Shake hands over the grave.)

(If it is the wish of the relatives a service may be held in the evening with hymns, reading, and address appropriate to the occasion.)

As the Labour Churches began to wane in importance, towards the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, their function was often taken over by the Socialist Sunday Schools. The Sunday Schools were often called upon to conduct funerals. In January 1909 the Young Socialist printed the following obituary:

> Mary Morrison: She took an active part in the movement for the emancipation of women. A short service was held in the house, at which Comrade Alfred Russell spoke, and at the grave side Comrade George Hale voiced the sad feelings of all gathered there, and the ceremony was fittingly closed by the singing of two verses of -- "There are Lonely Hearts to Cherish." Mary has done her part towards the building of the New City. By us of the Central School and all who knew hereshe will ever be remembered as a good comrade and a faithful worker for the commonweal.[1]

Socialist Sunday Schools -- A Manual (published in 1923) made the following recommendations regarding funeral services:

---

1. The Young Socialist, Jan. 1909, p. 386, report from Central School, Glasgow.

Funeral Services: F. J. Gould's book Funeral Services Without Theology is recommended. Funeral services to include personal details of the career of the deceased -- are to have almost a cheerful tone, serene at all times.

Address in Chapel: Reference to what life means, also death. Each a part of the universe. Our opportunities. Man lives on. Our duty to the living. Reference to the deceased: his ideals and acts. The good that men do lives after them. Grief is natural, but those who have passed away whilst living in our memories would that we should go forward with our work.

At the grave: We commit this body to the keeping of Mother Earth, which bears us all. At Cremation: We have committed our dead to the flame which, with potent and kindly alchemy, will dissolve the body into its simple elements.

Then a few words on the future, built on the work of those who have passed.[1]

Visitation of the Sick and Absent Members:

Many people within Labour Church congregations were much aware of the pastoral function of a Church; they advocated some system whereby selected members should visit the sick and troubled to give comfort and help. Much of this work quite naturally fell to the ladies, who were frequently organized into visiting teams. Unfortunately, in many places this was combined with the work of the monthly collector of financial subscriptions. While regular monthly visits meant good personal contact within the congregation, and more regular income, it often meant that the pastoral side of the visitation went unheeded.

The pastoral functions which seem to have been discharged most efficiently were the administration of financial assistance to keep members out of the 'poorhouse' and the neighbourly home-nursing and assistance with the house-work when illness disabled one or more members of the family and disrupted the home routine.

---

1. Socialist Sunday Schools -- A Manual, Chapter 9, pp. 97ff.

The ministrations of 'spiritual comfort' to the sick was a topic the visitors desired instruction in. Esther Wood's article on "Our Message for Sufferers" was the Labour Prophet's answer:

> We must enlist the sick and the mourners in the great cause of Humanity . . . convince them that they are neither useless nor burdensome when, instead of the heroism of action, they give us only the heroism of endurance, quicken in them the sense of comradship with the more active workers, and make them feel what I have often called the worth-while-ness of suffering, and the sacred part it may take in growth and development.[1]

Her points were these:

1. Pain is the result of broken law -- suffering simply means that "Someone has blundered". Nine-tenths of disease and accident and moral failure is preventable; but Sin is not so much deliberate offence as a falling short, a failure to fulfill what might have been. Let us be honest in these things.

2. Someone blundered! The blunderer gets off 'scot free' -- and the greatest suffering is borne by the innocent. The sins of one are visited upon the many. We are interdependent on one another.

3. Suffering is always present in the struggle within nature, the struggle of the higher with the lower. "Every pain wisely met, patiently overcome, or bravely endured, is a step upward. . . . Be glad then, sick and weary comrades, for you lead the van of progress, your voices 'urge man's search to vaster issues', and your tears water the earth's young harvest of mercy and love."

4. When visiting the sick, respect each personality. Make visits brief; be cheerful, but not untimely gay; deal openly with the patient; speak to the aged and dying, tenderly, of the permanence

---

1. Prophet, August, 1894. p.108.

of life and action and the abiding influence of all good action. "Death is change, but change is not death."

Prayer:

The prayer life of the Labour Churches makes a fascinating study, for here we enter upon an aspect that reveals the religious spirit wrestling with secular tendencies within the congregations. During the early nineties the question "To pray or not to pray?" was not as important as "What form of prayer shall be used?". Within ten years the relative importance of these questions had been reversed.

Trevor's influence was favourable to a really moving prayer experience on the part of the whole congregation. Mrs. Sarah Dickinson vividly remembers his own prayers as simple and dignified, and yet not in the least formal.

> His prayers were almost like an intimate conversation with a good friend.[1]

But most people called upon to lead Labour Church congregations did not have the ability of the founder of the movement.

Many of those taking part in Labour services, while not wishing to disparage prayer, shrank from themselves leading in public prayer. Rather than make a muddle of it, experiments were made in leaving it out, but the lack was felt as a very serious omission. One congregation tried to solve the difficulty by obtaining copies of written prayers from a local minister and John Trevor. Perhaps the minister complied, for an unofficial Labour Church -- Form of Prayer was published.[2] Whether or not this was used by any congregation is not known, but it certainly did not come into general use. The Churches

---

1. Personal interview.
2. See Appendix, pp. 668 ff.
   Prayer in Labour Churches is discussed by R. A. Beckett in the Prophet, April 1898, p. 173.

followed Trevor's advice in his answer to the above request:

> I can well understand anyone shrinking from public prayer. . . . I often wish I could shirk it. But I should find it a more serious and difficult thing to omit it, save, perhaps, on occasions. It is an expression of my religious life; and if we fail to express our life it has a tendency to die out of us. It is an intensely real thing to me, and being real to me it is a reality to the audience, save of course in the case of those who do not believe in it. This I take to be indicated by the subdued applause which has always followed the prayer in our special gatherings, when the audience is unusually large and a considerable portion of those present have not suppressed the feelings in accordance with conventional proprieties.
>
> But of course, I never write a prayer, and to supply our friend's needs would be strangely difficult for me. There seems a frightful amount of mechanism about the business -- so foreign to the intense life and enthusiasm of our whole Labour Movement. Our audiences would not endure addresses read to them from a manuscript -- unless the very, very best reading were given them. They value life, intense life, above everything else. Why should we read to the God of the Labour Movement, when the men and women of the movement won't stand it?
>
> The question of prayer came up in connection with the Cinderella meeting. . . . I said -- Do as you like about it. If you want to pray, pray; if you don't, don't. And I might have added -- if you can't pray, don't. If you desire to pray and your sense of need does not overcome your difficulties, then abandon it. Don't do it for the sake of conventionality.
>
> All the same, I think the omission of a real live prayer a very serious defect and loss in a Labour Church Service, and I am glad to find others feel it.[1]

Trevor went on to admit that for some printed prayers could be a help, at least occasionally, so long as these could be made real to the audience.

In most Labour Churches the question of prayer was left to the chairman for the evening. Sometimes prayers were read, sometimes given extemporaneously, and sometimes (one might suspect increasingly) omitted. However it does appear to have been standard procedure to repeat the Lord's Prayer in unison early in the service.

---

1. Prophet, May, 1893, p. 39.

While it is true that chairmen shrank from leading in public prayer, there was a felt need among Labour Church members for a deeper religious life, of which Trevor commented:

> . . . the demand for what I may call rational prayer among us is much greater than the supply of it.[1]

In later years the question "To pray or not to pray?" was raised. Again the answer was left largely with the chairmen -- and prayer was ever more frequently omitted, till in many congregations the Lord's Prayer was the only one used. This trend continued, till, in the latter part of the first decade of the twentieth century, secularist influences began to gain ascendancy, and even the Lord's Prayer was omitted by congregational request. Economic socialism with its agnostic religious aspects began to dominate the Socialist (as some congregations began to call themselves) and Labour Churches. This same tendency was behind an agitation to delete or alter all theological references in the hymns, and to revise the principles; by 1909 the Socialist and Labour Church Union Conference was dominated by this element. This change was possible because an awakened conscience and a growing social gospel within the Churches and Chapels was providing a possible spiritual home for many who formerly would have had to come to the Labour Church; and many Labour Church supporters drifted back to their original denominations rather than resist the secular tendencies in the Labour congregations.

Labour Church people, being by nature very critical of all ceremony and ritual were want to ask "What is the real nature of prayer anyway?" The answer most usually given has found expression in the lines of James Montgomery's poem:

---

1. Prophet, November, 1894, p. 147.

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
Uttered or unexpressed.

Perhaps the answer given by Mrs. Tyvie Mayo (who often wrote under the name "Edward Garrett") is as typically 'Labour Church' as we are likely to find:

> What is real prayer? It is the longing of the human spirit to realise its contact with the Divine Spirit. The most real prayers of individuals have probably never been put into words at all. If one could get at the root of them they are all summed up in "God's will be done." That is all we want, only we don't all know it. So some of us pray for this or that, forgetting the truth of a great poet's words:-
>
> If I asked my God for earthly things
> I should think that I worshipped the devil.
>
> But the experience of life teaches us better. We learn not to be so eager for this or for that. We discover that what we really want is God Himself, and only when we ask for Him, do we really pray. . . .
>
> Therefore the question remains only for the Labour Church itself. Does it solemnly, -- though secretly -- lift up its heart to God? Let it shun doctrinal prayers, preaching prayers, repetition prayers as much as it will, and seek only <u>sincere desires</u> -- <u>honest aspirations</u>.[1]

<u>Ethical and Religious Beliefs</u>:

> What does the Labour Church believe? A question often asked and difficult to answer. Is not the Labour Church trying to live out its beliefs? When this is the case, it is ever most difficult, if not impossible, to express the faith in a creed. As with the individual (so I trust with the Labour Church), who has a real, genuine faith in anything or anybody, to know the faith, you must know the whole life, the inward strife and victory, as well as the outward deed.[2]

So wrote Annie Thurston in 1897. Today the difficulty is as great, or even greater than Mrs. Thurston's, for, in the sense of systematics, the Labour Church never had a theology. It abhorred all dogmatic and creedal formulation. Nevertheless, it existed as a

---

1. <u>Prophet</u>, July, 1894, p. 93.
2. <u>Prophet</u>, February, 1897, p. 19.

vital fellowship, and as such must have had a body of belief which was held in common and which accounted for its life and stability. It is our task to find this 'faith' and to try to state it concisely and systematically.

Our main lead is given by John Trevor's statement of the principles of the Labour Church, published shortly after its first service in 1891. It was accepted by many of the congregations which sprang up spontaneously throughout the north of England immediately thereafter,[1] and by many congregations already in existence.[2] It was adopted by the first conference of Labour Church in 1893. It was used as the basis of later Labour Church statements. These facts indicate that this statement did express a good deal of that unconscious faith which underlay its popular appeal.

Inasmuch as these principles were the only official statement when the Labour Churches spread through the land, we may assume that they at least indicate the germinal ideas that called forth the enthusiasms of the working people into a religious organization. But as a number of congregations would not accept this statement without revision, and as press reports of Labour Church meetings did as much or more than Labour Church publications in initiating the organization of Labour Church congregations, we may conclude

---

1. Birmingham was never quite happy with the Principles as stated by Trevor.
2. See extract of sermon preached at the Unitarian Church, Friars Street, Ipswich, by the Rev. W. E. Atack. Speaking of the Labour Church, he said "I intend to be an ardent advocate of this attempt to work with God for the establishment of His kingdom on earth." He then discussed each of the five Labour Church principles. - Prophet, November 1893, p. 108

In the sacred books we read how God did speak
To holy men in many different ways;
But hath the present age no God to seek?
Or is God silent in these latter days?

The word were but a blank, a hollow sound,
If He that spake it were not speaking still,
If all the light and all the shade around
Were naught but issues of Almighty will.

So then, believe that every bird that sings
And every flower that stars the fresh green sod
And every thought the happy summer brings
To the pure spirit is a word of God.

-- Hartley Coleridge
L.C. Hymn Book No. 52

that this statement is important more as one means of giving expression to a general feeling already present than as itself an initiating call to belief and action. Besides, it was not in any sense binding as a confession of faith might be. People who joined Labour Churches need not agree with it. It was more, as it were, a bugle call which rallied unorganized and sporadic guerilla sorties into an organized and regular campaign. People whose social consciences were awakened and whose religious aspirations were not satisfied by the Church or Chapel turned to Trevor's movement in hopes of fulfilment of both religious and political needs.

The following is Trevor's statement:

The Labour Church is based upon the following Principles:
1. That the Labour Movement is a Religious Movement.
2. That the Religion of the Labour Movement is not a Class Religion, but unites members of all classes in working for the Abolition of Commercial Slavery.
3. That the Religion of the Labour Movement is not Sectarian or Dogmatic, but Free Religion, leaving each man free to develop his own relations with the Power that brought him into being.
4. That the Emancipation of Labour Can only be realised so far as men learn both the Economic and Moral Laws of God, and heartily endeavour to obey them.
5. That the development of Personal Character and the improvement of Social Conditions are both essential to man's emancipation from moral and social bondage.[1]

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE

"God is in the Labour Movement"[2]

The most important idea in Trevor's mind, when the Labour Church was formed, was that the contemporary sphere of God's activity was the Labour Movement. In his editorial in the first Labour

---

1. Prophet, February 1892, p. 16.
2. The discussion of each of the principles is headed by a motto used by the Labour Churches.

Prophet he wrote:

> . . . it is our solemn conviction that the spirit now working in the hearts of the people towards emancipation is essentially a religious spirit, and that in the great social awakening of our times we have the basis of a new conception, not only of our relations with each other, but also of our relations with the God of all life. While the churches are approaching this movement from without, while they are seeking to square their old theology with the new sociology, . . . , it is our mission to tell those whom they are seeking to save -- the toilers awakened to a new hope for freedom, and a new determination to get it -- that their own awakening is the foundation of a religion of their own, which may find expression in the religion of the churches, or not, according to the development of their own moral natures.
>
> God is in the Labour Movement. This is the word of our prophecy -- . . .[1]

"God is in the Labour Movement": this conviction arose from Trevor's idea of the vital nature of Religion as 'life lived at its full'.

> Religion is life -- full, rich, free -- life lived in communion with all that is -- life realised asspart of a great whole. It means the expansion of man's whole nature, the continuous development of all his faculties, the progressive realisation of all that he is. In its practical form it is man's effort to live in right relations with God, the source and sustainer of all life. It is not a question of beliefs, of definitions, of theories -- these spring from the man's religion far more than his religion from these.[1]

Because orthodox church life seemed to Trevor to deny such a full life by its demand for conformity to stereotyped standards, he felt compelled to work outside the organized churches, to deny

---

1. Prophet, Jan. 1892, p. 4. Cf. also Quest, p. 124 -- ". . . The only way for man to keep up with the march of the world is for him to set the Art of Living with God first before him as the one necessary attainment from which all else must emanate, and then all the knowledge and experience and skill which he can acquire will be unified around this one Divine Art of Life as its centre, all blessing and benefiting the whole of Humankind. . . . -- only when all the activities of life radiate from a life lived with God can we pcssibly command all human knowledge and power to the common end of human well-being."

the authority of creeds and dogmas, and to emphasize the necessity for individual expression. Thus he advocated a faith allowing absolute freedom of belief and unbelief, a faith based on life, full, rich, and free.

For years Trevor had been in search of the religion which would express such a life. It was in a small Mancunian group of philosophical anarchists led by a socialist, William Baillie, that Trevor saw the complete self-giving (which was so much a part of his idea of real living) which was yet divorced from the narrowing individualistic spiritual pride characteristic of his childhood faith. If the Labour Movement could call into being this kind of devotion, then surely this was the sphere in which God was working; this was the work to which God's prophets were called; this was the work to which he must give his all.

Trevor held that wherever men were willing to risk their all, even their lives, there God was at work. He had seen this kind of devotion among the evangelical Christians, but he felt that their vision was too narrow, for it opposed, ignored, or at best merely tolerated the human aspects of life. He found it also among those who worked for the amelioration of living conditions according to socialistic ideas, but he knew their program lacked appreciation of the spiritual dimensions of life. He conceived the Labour Church as a means of giving an harmonious expression to both these ideas, and of providing a way for people to co-operate in these two avenues of 'Godward evolution'. 'That the Labour Movement is a religious movement' was indeed an idea fundamental to the very conception of the Labour Church Movement.[1] And to

---

1. A. J. Waldegrave, one-time secretary of the Labour Church Union

many, Trevor's call to co-operate with God at the 'growing-point' of Evolution was that which answered their doubts about traditional religion and satisfied their religious aspirations for the Good Life.[1]

The idea that the Labour Movement had religious significance is evident in the publications, articles, stories, poems, speeches, and sermons of early Labour Propagandists.[2] Again and again the claim is made that the socialist way of life is <u>the way</u> of brotherly love and human justice.[3] The more explicit claim made by the Labour Churches certainly met with sympathetic, if occasionally not enthusiastic, response from those whose thinking was directed to the needs of labouring people. Especially in the North of England, in the five years following 1892 considerable support from this section of the British public was given to them.

The belief that the Labour Movement was a religious movement

---

1. wrote in the <u>Prophet</u>, April, 1897; "We proclaim that in the Socialist movement there is the germ of a higher religious life than ever Paul thought possible. Paul never rose to the conception of a perfected human life on this planet. He always speaks of "this world" with a tone of despair."
1. Trevor, in "An Unspoken Address" (<u>Prophet</u>, August, 1896, p. 127; see Appendix, p. 694): "I associate . . . the Socialist movement with the Religious movement . . . because in the life of the Socialist movement I recognise the vital energy out of which a higher and freer Religion must be unfolded."- p. 600.
2. Eg.: J. Keir Hardie maintained that nationalization of the means of production, distribution, and exchange have nothing to do with socialism as such. Socialism is a religion. You change the economic system to make it possible. Mr. Overton reports that this was a favourite platform and private conversation theme. For a published statement of this idea, see Lowe, <u>Keir Hardie</u>, p. 104
3. A. J. Waldegrave, after reading this section, comments: "Yes, but what confusion there was between the idea of Socialism as a way of life and the conception of it as an economic doctrine and a political program. It is to this confusion that both the rise and fall of the Labour Church movement may be traced."

rested, in some measure, on an affirmation of a Divine Evolution, and on a denial of any doctrine of original sin or human depravity. Man is essentially good; give him a reasonable chance, give him a good environment, or give him the opportunity to rise above his miserable past and he will develop towards his divine birthright. If conditions are favourable, man will progressively, though not automatically,[1] evolve through various stages, to his divine destiny.

To illustrate this belief the following quotation from S. J. Chapman in the Labour Prophet is given:

> The medium of realisation is the human will -- God realises himself, as humanity realises itself. That this realisation is far on its way may be seen by him who has eyes to see and who can read the signs of the times, in the thoughts, aspirations, and social movements of this century. The inner meaning of society and of the Gospel was largely missed in the middle ages, though confusedly felt and dimly seen as through a glass darkly.
>
> Effort works the change. It is true that the individual moves with society, but it is true also that the individual plays his part in moving society. No life of effort is without effect, no act of love is cast "as rubbish to the void":-
>
> The noblest gift a hero leaves his race
> Is to have been a hero.
>
> Broadly and briefly the view expressed in this paper is, that God is progressively revealed in society, and that morality is one side of this revelation. . . . As ideal and imperative, the moral law is absolutely and utterly distinct from prudent maxims based on an extensive experience of the pleasurable or painful effects of certain actions. Morality, through its imper-

---

1. "The Labour Movement, as a movement, is, when looked at from the point of view of history, only a log in a current. It is not Labour moving, but Labour being moved. At its present stage of development the Labour Movement is an effect, rather than a cause. I am at one with the fatalist -- so far.
   "But infinitely more than this is possible. It is possible for the men and women in the Labour movement to enter into relationship with the moving power, and to consciously work out divine possibilities of it. We may, if we but climb high enough, become God's fellow workers, and, ceasing to be logs in the stream, become ourselves navigators of the broad river of life." -- Trevor in the Prophet, March & April, 1894, p. 41.

ative, gives promise of the fulfilling of its ideal. History shows this process. Just as there is development in thought and feeling, so with many a stumble and many a backsliding, there is advance, fitful indeed, but still advance, in morals. The effort of society is not in vain, . . . The present practical morality, however, of civilized countries, while real so far as it goes, is no more final than the morality current in the Fiji Islands, though both are related expressions at different stages of the one real morality, which changeth not, and which is implicit in man; implicit to the end that it may be made explicit, for "there is nothing hid which shall not be made manifest."

"Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they." [1]

Though there is much that could be easily criticized in this article, the purpose here is not to isolate and deny particular statements or allusions, but to see in broad outline the underlying beliefs to which writer and lecturer could appeal and which he might modify in the direction of the socialist ideal. To this end further quotations from diverse writers in the Labour Prophet might be helpful.[2]

Mr. A. J. Waldegrave, one-time secretary of the Labour Church Union, commenting on First Corinthians, wrote:

---

1. Prophet, June 1895, p. 85.
2. Esther Walker in an article entitled 'Socialism as a Religion' writes in the Prophet, April 1893, p. 30: "Now, it is not necessary that a religion should personify its ideal. Whether a Socialist uses the word "God" or not matters little. At all events, his Ideal of a perfectly good being is that of a Brother, a Comrade; standing shoulder to shoulder, not only with the captains in the army of progress, but with the rawest of raw recruits that bring up the rear. And this gradual humanising of the Ideal -- this discovery of God in Men -- implies that humanity itself is essentially good, or at least capable of becoming good, and that therefore all men and women ought to have an equal chance of being good, of realising something of that Brotherhood of love and sympathy and helpfulness which the Socialist pictures in his mind." [Therefore anything that hinders this chance is per se wrong.]

> Now, we proclaim the divine mission of Socialism, in spite of the fact that of us it may be said, 'For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? We acknowledge the sheer materialism, the narrowness, the bitterness of many Socialists; but we see that beneath all this there is fermenting the new spirit, so that even an International Socialist Congress does not dishearten us. The belief in human Brotherhood and the desire for a beautiful human life are there -- the germ of a new religion. The test of Faith is to trust it. . . .
>
> The Labour Churches exist to declare this spiritual significance of the movement to secure the material means of well-being, marred though it is by jealousies and follies. Their message to the people is that which Paul expressed when he said, "Work out your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you." In that seeming paradox, it appears to me, is contained the whole philosophy and inspiration of the Labour Church movement. Translated into terms of modern life, and lived up to with the devotion of a Paul, it will regenerate society. Can we live up to it, working earnestly enough and trusting confidently enough?[1]

'Mysticus' writing on the Labour Church's first principle observes that:

> . . . it is because we have reached a certain stage of ethical development that the Socialist movement is to-day so strong. Certainly the development is not intellectual, as any Fabian lecturer will testify. But "ethical development" is a loose phrase and a platitude, and only by endeavouring to frame some conception of what it means psychologically can we make anything else of it. Granting that it means the evolution of brain faculties capable of deciding between right and wrong, we have then to ask how it is connected with religion.
>
> Theologians who know their business will say at once that morality has nothing to do with religion. One might arrive at the same conclusion by studying religious society as it exists. What they mean is that religion deals with the supersocial and morality merely with the social. . . .
>
> . . . Orthodox theology has a dual view of the world. It relies on the Devil to explain half the sum of things. What we want is a conception of the universe which will explain it as a whole; in which we can trace all things, good and bad, working together from one source to one end. That would be a philosophy. We want, also, a conception of man's place and power, which will show us what to look for in his history,

---

1. Prophet, April 1897, p. 51. For a further expression of Waldegrave's position see his defence of the Labour Church position in view of Canon Scott Holland's Criticism; Appendix pp 606f.

past and present, which can be seen to be reasonable so far as reason goes, and is also in accordance with whatever in our nature is beyond reason. That would be a religion. We want, further, an organisation in some way based on this conception, and tending to develop by practical work the whole nature of its members. That would be a Church.

Such a body would not be theological, nor anti-theological, . . . It would be a Church in close connection with the democracy, because history and present-day life both show that the "ethical reason" is always stronger in the masses than the classes. It would be a Labour Church, because the righteousness of labour needs insisting on just now.[1]

Again and again the note of development, progress, and evolution is sounded, and is related to the Divine activity in the labour movement. But this 'spiritual evolution' is not automatic. Man may be essentially good; he must be heroic too! Man's conscious effort and co-operation is required.

Trevor wrote in the Prophet:

. . . The surrounding Universe of Things perplexes and overwhelms us because we are not yet alive. . . . The Life around us falls upon us like the crushing breakers on the sea shore, because the Life within us is not strong enough to stand upright before its mighty force. . . .

We blame the Universe for these things, or perhaps God. But blame is useless. . . .

Our only chance is to grow -- to set against the Life without us a stronger and more resolute Life within. Children cannot build their sand castles amid the breakers. Full-grown men have learned to plant their works securely amid the waves that dash on our wildest coasts.

. . . The Problem of Life for each of us is how to become heroic, for life will never be worth living except to the Hero.

. . . the Problem of Life is how really to Live; not by any means how to live happily. This latter is quite a secondary thing. To make it the first thing is to take hold of Life wrong end up. . . . This Universe will not weaken or soften its forces for us. It is for us to strengthen or stiffen ourselves, or go under. What we continually need is more and yet more Life![2]

---

1. Prophet, May 1896, p. 79
2. Prophet, November, 1895, p. 166

This need to stand heroically against the worst that life can do is but part of the story of Godward evolution. Men may help or hinder progress, but the Universe itself is evolving toward the Divine.[1]

In My Quest For God, written in 1897, Trevor expressed this correlative faith in the world of things. His confidence in planning and acting, though he could not see clearly the way to the desired end, was

> . . . part of my deep faith in things, on which I have lived since the time I lost my Christianity -- a deep confidence in the trustworthiness of the Universe -- or rather a deep confidence that I may trust the Universe, from which I conclude that others may trust it also if they are themselves true. For these things are always above rule and dogma. They are always personal, and must spring from a personal relationship.[2]

Trevor acknowledges the transcendent aspect of God's being; but his emphasis is on [the] God's immanence.

> Our first duty is to accept ourselves and to trust the God within us. Then we are in the way of understanding the world, and of finding God everywhere.[3]

It is the immanent God who is working through human consciousness to the desired goal of the evolutionary process. Those who found Trevor's preaching and writing helpful seem to have been impressed by his emphasis on the 'God within', on the God that reveals himself in the 'here and now' through the medium of personal experience. Trevor acknowledged the validity of past revelation for time past, and suggested that we could learn much from it so long as we would not let it become for us an authoritative or final revelation.

---

1. "Trevor accepted Evolutionary theory à la Spencer, and applied it to Religion -- i.e. Godward evolution now revealing itself in Labour" -- Interview with A. J. Waldegrave.
2. Quest, pp. 248 & 249.
3. Prophet, June 1896, p. 93

Thus, those who were becoming uneasy about orthodox claims of finality in Christian revelation, but who were not prepared to go the way of the secularist[1], found Trevor's approach helpful.[2] His suggestion (that the growing point of Godward Evolution at the end of the 19th century was Socialism) gave to many, whose aspirations for human welfare and human justice needed reconciliation with their unthought-out but compelling loyalty to religious values, the inspiration they needed to throw themselves unstintingly into the wider Labour Movement.

Trevor's emphasis on the immanence of God, and on God's activity in the present raised serious doubts as to the importance and validity of historic revelations. He never doubted that these revelations were true, or that we might learn from them, though the heat of argument made him say things that might be interpreted as if he did. But, he did insist categorically that they must be seen in their historic perspective. To pretend that an event some hundreds of years past could be authoritative in our day was to him a denial of several centuries of development. Because our

---

1. "The first answer to the follies of traditional religion was Secularism, but this is wholly inadequate. Secularism cuts off man's development at the highest point. It therefore leads to reaction. A false religion can only be removed by a truer one. But Secularism, in clearing a deal of ground and emphasizing immediate facts, has done splendid service." -- John Trevor, in 'The Labour Church', an article in the Labour Annual, 1896, p. 41f.
2. "We believe in the light of earth, of knowledge, of the soul -- all rays from the divine source of life in the world and in man. We are Secularists, without desecrating Secularism to a doctrine of mud and blood and bones. We revel in the world that is, and weep in the world that is, and find freedom for all our faculties in the world that is. Infinity is here: Eternity is here: God is here: the divine life is to be lived by us, here and now." Trevor in the Prophet, June 1896, p. 96.

problems arise from our present situation, we must approach them from the insight which we receive in our own day. Trevor applied this line of reasoning to his view of the Christ. In an Unspoken Address to the Foreign Members of the International Socialist Congress meeting in London in July 1896, he wrote:

> The attempt to bring the thought of Jesus into the life of to-day as a guide and a standard is an anachronism, fatal to any complete development.[1]

There came a strong attack on Trevor for such a pronounced anti-Christian statement. It said nothing that he had not been quietly maintaining in Labour Churches for nearly five years[2]; but this

---

1. Prophet, August 1896, p. 124; cf. also Quest p. 122 - "You ask me what I think of Christ. -- 'God manifest in the flesh', as every great man is. Is not the whole earth 'the Living Garment of God'? Christ taught us to say, 'Our Father'; and we find it in our hearts to say it. But not only Christ, not only the noble men and women who have lived, not only sunshine and flowers, springtime and the song of birds, but sin also and misery, storm and destruction, cruelty and vice -- all must be considered if we would know God. He made all. It is for us to learn of him from all that he has made." Cf. also Prophet, April 1895, p. 57 - Trevor once went to hear a Christian Monk preaching in a Roman Catholic Church in Calais. Commenting on the Sermon, Trevor said that the Monk taught the fatal flow in all Christian teaching -- Hare the utter severance between God and the world which maintains this poor world as a Pandemonium, or at best a Purgatory. This life is nothing, the next everything; this life suffering, the next happiness; this life poverty, the next glory -- and parents must choose between the two, at the eternal peril of their children. . . . The monk, with all the passion of earnest conviction and heart-breaking pity, represented the children doomed to eternal hell, cursing the parents who had brought them into being for not teaching them how to avoid so frightful a destiny.
2. "The religion I want to teach is the religion of the nineteenth century, helped by the first century, but not in any sense bound by it. The inspiration of it must come from what God is doing now all around us and within us. As of old, I find I must get outside existing churches to preach the new gospel. They may do a great deal in softening the hearts of the middle classes toward the labour movement, but they cannot develop the religious heart of the labour movement, as it needs developing if we are to have a true civilisation." John Trevor in a letter to William Harbutt Dawson published in New Era, January 1892. See also Prophet, January 1897, p. 2.

statement was bold, to the point, and widely circulated. People within and without the Labour Churches rose to take sides on the issue.[1] The results were a rather sudden falling away of the Labour Church in agnostic and atheistic directions. It prepared the way for the 1906 revisions of the Labour Church principles in which the religious nature of the Labour Movement was made a supplementary notion to appeal to the few who liked it, rather than as a foundational principle giving meaning to the whole idea of the Labour Church.

But these are not the main points to be considered at this time. Rather, it is important to notice that Trevor's rejection of historic Christianity was a correlative of his view of God's self-revelation in the present. Because God's present activity supersedes all prior action, anyone who would know God completely must find Him by becoming immersed in that movement where He is now working. Because Trevor discerned the Hand of God at work in the Labour Movement, he formed the Labour Church to help people find God in the midst of Socialism.

THE SECOND PRINCIPLE

"Let Labour be the Basis of Civil Society"

The above heading, a quotation from Mazzini,[2] was used as a motto by the Labour Prophet; it succinctly states the significance of the second principle of the Labour Church. Because class consciousness was the most vulnerable aspect presented by any socialist body

---

1. Cf. Appendix, pp. 596-608.
2. G. M. Young in Victorian England, Portrait of an Age, p. 160, suggests that, for an understanding of Mid-Victorian ideas, Mazzini might repay some study. Mazzini's influence on Trevor's thinking is quite marked.

organizing itself as a church, and proclaiming the brotherhood of all men, the Labour Church must avoid this pitfall. In actual fact it was because of class consciousness that the active sympathies of a number of ardent socialists were not forthcoming: 'How could any socialist body pretend that it was not, by its very aims and objects, opposed to all capitalist classes of society?' and 'How could socialism be true to its principles and yet claim to unite members of all classes?' On the other hand, it was this question of class consciousness which received most frequent criticism from the churches and chapels: 'How could any group taking for its own the name of one class of society seriously claim to unite all classes? If it took sides with one class then it automatically opposed the others! If it supported the cause of labour against the claims of the middle and upper classes then it denied the truth of its second principle, and it was a class church!'

Trevor and his associates were well aware of the force which these criticisms would have, for in restricted senses, they were true. The name 'Labour Church' rather than 'Workingmen's Church' was chosen to help overcome them.[1] Though the leaders of the Labour Church saw the justice of workingmen's claims, and did all in their power to see that these were granted, they refused to identify themselves with such a restricted program. They realized that, if they were to form a new religious expression they must look beyond the present opposition of classes to that just ordering of society where classes would be no more. Thus, in its life and

---

1. *Supra p. 7.*

work, the Labour Church must anticipate this future state by admitting all who wished to associate themselves regardless of the class from which they came; it must realize some degree of 'Classlessness' in its own organization.[1]

To forestall criticism on the basis of class partisanship, the front page of the first number of the Labour Prophet bore the headline "Is the Labour Church a Class Church?" The Rev. Philip H. Wicksteed, then Warden of University Hall, London, answered the question:

> . . . we have to pay attention, first to necessary things which have no importance in themselves, and are only the means of life, and then to life itself. Now, if one set of men are producing the means of life, and another set of men are living, we have a state of slavery, in which the worker has not his fair share of life, and the man who has a rich life does not do his fair share of work.
>
> So, when we think of the world as it ought to be, when there shall be no more slavery, we begin by thinking of everyone (except the weak, the miniature, and the ailing) as doing work enough to provide the means of his own living; and then we think of him as living a full life, in fellowship with his fellow workers and his fellow-livers. To strive for this is not to fight for a class but to fight against classes on behalf of society itself. But next we shall find that the men who are producing the means of life will get a richer life if they set aside some portion of their "means" for the service of writers, scientific men, artists, musicians, actors, -- perhaps even ballet-dancers or preachers -- who can directly minister to, enlarge, and uplift their living by giving them enjoyment, feeding their sense of beauty, keeping before them high aims, and reminding them of the meaning of life. Such men will be formed into classes, and their existence will only be justified if they are of service to the mass of workers and livers, who are not a class but society itself.
>
> . . . The mass of workers and livers are the organism they serve and on which they are dependent. The labour movement and

---

1. In the concept of a classless church the ideal of the Utopian Socialists, like Fourier, Owen, and the Saint-Simon school rather than the Scientific Socialism of Marx was followed. Where Marx saw the class conflict as the instrument for social betterment, the Utopians saw it as an evil to be overcome.

> the labour church, then, are not a class movement and a class church, but a movement and a church that gives warning to all "classes", that they have no right to exist except so far as they serve the masses and make their life fuller and greater.[1]

Here Wicksteed stated the ideal for which the Labour Church stood. It was on this belief in the possibility of a "Classless" society that it, though it accepted the practical situation with the acknowledged fact of the class struggle, based its second principle.

Even in the discussion of the more practical and immediate problems, where the class struggle was an important aspect, Labour Church sympathizers did not lose sight of the fundamental principle of the desired equality and fraternity of all men. Indeed, even in their effort to organize against capitalist employers their appeal was based on the principle of Universal Brotherhood. To illustrate this point, we quote from Tom Mann's article in the first issue of the Labour Prophet. He begins on a note of severe criticism of free and established Christian Churches.

> . . . although not a few active and earnest advocates of trade-unionism are closely identified with some church or chapel, to the mass of workers, churches and chapels are alien institutions. . . . religious institutions have pretended to preach the fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man and have persistently defended social customs and business proceedings that have daily and hourly violated the first principles of brotherhood. . . . inequalities have been nurtured by the Church, privilege has been upheld at the expense of justice, and to-day may be witnessed attendants at church and chapel who have obtained power over their brothers, and who drive and oppress and tyrannise over brothers and sisters, and are counted among the "faithful", whilst those they have deprived of fair conditions are looked upon as outcasts by the very Church that preaches brotherhood, and when they attempt to obtain redress are very frequently condemned by the Church in the interests of the monopolists. Can we wonder that, under these conditions, the workman wants little to do with churches? The plain fact is that to-day the church upholds privilege and monopoly as against truth, justice, and brotherhood, and many thousands of workmen, really religiously disposed, positively refuse to become identified

---

1. Prophet, January 1892, p. 1.

with those who cry "Lord, Lord!" but whose behaviour is essentially selfish and inconsiderate. What, then, are we urging -- reconciliation? No, that is not our business; but with regard to religion, as with politics, it is for workers to vitalise their own faith by drawing direct from the fountain head, and living daily and hourly a truly religious life. Doctrinal hair-splitting we do not want, and cannot have. A salvation by faith alone is as foreign to our conception of well-being as the talk of work done by a steam engine which never had any steam in the cylinders. . . .

> The Labour Movement needs its own church. Not that we want sectionalism, but we do want Realism. A balancing of forces is now taking place; co-operative societies and trade unions are gradually joining forces, and they both take their stand on the broad principle of the Brotherhood of Man. It is for each of us individually to daily endeavour more clearly to realise all that is contained in the potent words, the Fatherhood of God. Utilitarianism will take us a long way, but not all the way. We require the recognition of the personal relationship and the individual responsibility; without this, the strongest of us are not safe.[1]

Tom Mann here manages to hold before us the two characteristic Labour Church attitudes to its second principle. On the one hand it realistically faced the situations of industrial life and boldly proclaimed its opposition to conditions as it found them. It was reformatory in its character, and thus in a sense, class-conscious. But at the same time the Labour Church always held before itself the vision of a reformed society where classes and their attendant evils could no longer exist.

This duality expressed a deeper unity; it was because it took sides in an existing class struggle, and raised its voice against the evils of capitalism, that the Labour Church could proclaim its faith in the ultimate abolition of all classes. In view of its ideal it could truly and rightly claim to be an expression of a classless religion; but whether in point of fact it was such is quite another question. There is evidence to show that a number

---

1. Prophet, January, 1892, pp. 5f.

of congregations included professional men, factory owners, and skilled craftsmen, but the greater number of members were tradesmen and labouring people. Certainly these members from the "upper" classes objected to the system which put them in positions of higher status and greater privilege, but still, within the Labour Church fellowship, they were accepted; the barriers of class distinction were overcome. Perhaps we might hazard the opinion that, in several instances at least, the Labour Church claim to unite members of all classes in the effort to abolish commercial slavery was justified by its life and example.

When the Labour Church lost the inspiration of this second principle as it seemed to do in later years; it ceased to be a vital religious force and became a mere appendix to a political party. Soon thereafter it was discarded in the race for respectability and power. If this observation be true, then the second principle was a very important article in the faith -- but little was written directly about it. It was rather an assumption which most socialists of the day made naturally and easily. It is seen most clearly in its negative aspect, in the criticisms of church and chapel.[1] The criticism given with greatest detail and frequency was that the institutionalized forms of Christianity were almost invariably on

---

1. Trevelyan, English Social History, p. 515 - In commenting on a period a little earlier maintains that the clergy of the establishment had gained themselves the reputation of being the group most loyal to the High Tory Party in the days of its decline. A reaction to this brought the "Slum Parson" to minister to the slum parishes -- but not in time to save the reputation of the church. It is true that, during the second enclosure movement, the people who went to the towns in search of work associated the parish priest with the squire as responsible for his loss of tenure and employment on the land.

the side of Captialism and opposed to Labour's ambitions.[1]

The assumptions underlying the criticism of the historic Churches are contained in the belief that the churches which claim to believe the doctrine of the brotherhood of all men have no right to support the capitalist classes against the working classes. If tradition binds them to the support of the status-quo -- then away with tradition. Justice and brotherhood are better guides than precedent. If the present economic system is unjust, then change the system; it is better to be true to principle than to conform to convention.

What is abundantly clear in the general line of criticism is that its assumptions lay deep in the emotional attitudes of British Socialists. Even where some churchmen were sympathetic to the plight of Labour, their sympathy and help could not be fully accepted for their basic agreement with the economic systems of the day vitiated their efforts. The Labour Church believed in revolutionizing the economic system by the rigid application of the principle of brotherhood; the suggestion of slavery in any form was intolerable. Any scheme proposing less than the freeing of workers from commercial fetters seemed a mere binding of wounds that labour might be kept in its chains; all help less than this seemed to imply patronage, insulting the dignity and status of labour and continuing the hated class distinctions. Class-conscious labouring people would not tolerate 'Capitalist' Churches and so desired to create classless ones where labour would be the basis of civil society, and where privilege of status would not exist.

---

1. Vide supra pp. 84 ff.

The Labour Church was such an attempt.

THE THIRD PRINCIPLE

"God and Liberty" [1]

The third principle makes liberty of thought and belief the dogma of the Labour Church.

In the late nineteenth century it was believed by many that Evolution was producing a new and better world; among other things, it was believed that a new humanitarian religion was to supercede the older doctrines. This hope is expressed in In Memoriam.

> Ring in the valiant man and free
> The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
> Ring out the darkness of the land,
> Ring in the Christ that is to be.

Trevor agreed with Tennyson's hope but not with his Christology. He believed that this new faith was finding its expression in the Labour Movement. It was a 'freer and larger Religion than even the great-hearted Paul dreamed of', due not so much to the 'teachings of one man or set of men' as to the 'Natural development of man's moral, intellectual, and spiritual nature'.[2] The function of the Labour Church was to organize the best conditions for its growth among the people.

The condition of maximum growth he believed to be freedom from restrictions. Therefore 'the Labour Church refused to recognize any fetters of limitations, either in the name of Christianity on the one hand, or in the name of Secularism on the other.' At the same time it welcomed both Christian and Secularist to its membership, if each would frankly accept liberty and would not try to

---

1. This motto of the Labour Church was taken from F. de Lamennais's L'Avenir.
2. Cf. Prophet, January 1896, p. 8.

impose his beliefs on others. Tolerance was the complementary characteristic necessary to maintain a real freedom of belief.

In actual fact, Christians and Secularists did work together in Labour Church:

> There are many Christians in our Labour Churches. At our recent Conference at Halifax they were well in evidence, and expressed themselves with perfect freedom. They neither gave offence to others by their utterances, nor took offence at the utterances of others. Our liberty enabled us to meet in the unity of the Spirit, and to go away deeply encouraged and strengthened.[1]

Trevor claimed that most religious groups were not tolerant. They represented the religious way of life as very narrow and circumspect, and have thus given religion an oppressive atmosphere and a reactionary bias. In this respect, he believed them to be in error. After explaining his own religious experience, Trevor wrote:

> I should not dream of generalizing from these subjective facts. It seems to me monsterous that any man, should declare his way of following and finding <u>God</u> to be <u>The Way</u>. It is Creed and Dogma and Authority all coming back on us; and with these human tyranny too. In social matters there is some excuse for dogma -- in other words, law. In the spiritual life there is absolutely no excuse. . . . No two lives are the same, and no two religions are.[2]

The way for any partidular individual may be very narrow, because man is limited, but the man who would conclude that his own narrow path is the only way is a 'bigot and an enemy of human progress'. The way to God is the way of life itself, 'It is as broad as the

---

1. Trevor, Prophet, January 1896, p. 8. Miss Evelyn March-Phillipps reported in the <u>Spectator</u>, April 21, 1891; p. 535: "Not all who join have become even deists for in the words of the founder 'the agnostic who does not know what he believes, and the atheist who believes nothing, may sit side by side here with the man who believes a good deal'".

2.

universe is vast and God infinite'.[1] All that man needs to do is to live and grow.

> About our souls infinite paths radiate to the God who is everywhere about us. There is no reason, save in our own limitations, why we should do anything but grow all round, and touch God more and more intimately at every point.[2]

Complete liberty is permissible and desirable because man's natural growth, moral as well as physical, can be trusted. That growth may be, and often is, perverted by disease, accident, ignorance, and superstition, but the way to regain health and normal development is to remove the hinderance and to allow Nature free play. Implied in this 'dogma' of liberty is a belief in the natural goodness of man which becomes explicit only when free growth is permitted. Any doctrine of man's natural depravity is excluded, and the suggestion is made that the perversity of man, so evident in every community, will vanish as the environment is improved and as restraints on human activities are relinquished.

Perhaps the most forceful and certainly the most widely circulated statement of the entailment of the third principle was Trevor's article in the Labour Prophet, under the title "The Labour Church in England -- an Unspoken Address to the Foreign Members of the International Socialist Congress, London, July 1896".[3] The reader who

---

1. Cf. Prophet, June 1896, p. 93; In this article Trevor qualifies his view: "There is one sense in which the way of life is narrow. It is personal, lonely, intensely individual. I see no tendency for the inner life of man to become collective. With a growing Collectivism in regard to the means of life, the safeguard of freedom will lie more and more in the pronounced Individualism of life itself.
2. Trevor, Prophet, June 1896, p. 93.
3. Prophet, August 1896, pp. 123ff. This article also appeared in pamphlet form in several languages including French, German, and English.

wishes to follow Trevor's idea in greater detail is referred to the Appendix.[1]

Trevor claimed that the development of the Labour Church was a step towards freedom from the chains of either tradition or discipleship:

> . . . claims for mastership and discipleship are utterly futile in our religious development. Here is life all about us, here is movement, here are opportunities such as men never had before. Those who know how to use them rightly are the religious men, whatever they call themselves; and those who don't know how to use them rightly are the irreligious men, whatever they call themselves; and those societies and institutions which help men to enter into truer and nobler relationship are the really religious societies -- the only real churches of our day, whatever their name be.
>
> Much more remains to be said on this matter. Meanwhile we organise the Labour Church, because we protest against the assumptions of the other churches in religion and their feebleness in social reform. We believe that the attempt to confine religion in narrow historic channels is extremely mischievous. There are undoubtedly what are called broad men in the churches, but they are only broad in the sense that they have adopted such a narrow basis for their religion that they cannot possibly keep within the limits of it.
>
> Freedom in society and freedom in religion must go hand in hand, the essential things in this freedom being that there shall be "neither arrogance nor servility in the relation of human beings", and that every man shall "stand up straight before God". The time for such freedom is not yet; but the Labour Church, in frankly espousing the cause of the weak and poor and enslaved, in supporting the toilers in the practical methods they adopt for their emancipation, and developing a sense that God is working through the means they use, is endeavouring to hasten its advent.[2]

Trevor's belief in 'free religion' rests on a fear of authoritarianism and a confidence in some immanent potentiality which will develop and mature if only given freedom from the influences which would force it in uncongenial directions. It may be possible to

---

1. Excerpts from this article, and controversy arising from it, will be found in the Appendix, pp. 596-608

relate this fear and counterbalancing confidence to his psycho-neurosis, as indeed seems to be foreshadowed in his autobiography; but while that is important for John Trevor, it is not the significant fact for the Labour Church. What the student of social ethics would know is why this appeal to "freedom from doctrine" should appeal to socialists generally. The answer I believe is two fold.

In the first place, as we have indicated above, socialists were very critical of the Churches and their vested interest in capitalistic society. Many saw all doctrinal statements and creedal formulations, not as sincere ways of trying to express faith and belief, but as techniques for gaining and holding the support of those otherwise opposed to their ends. Religion was, to use the famous words, "the opiate of the people"! Socialists say the Churches, and particularly the ministers and priests as hypocritical allies of their capitalist oppressors. Therefore the means used to hold the minds and affections of the people must be broken or used in the service of the new philosophy. Rituals, creeds, and doctrines must be discredited; freedom of belief was the handiest weapon. In more general terms we might say that Socialism, a revolt against the accepted economic basis of society, rebelled against the Church and her doctrine because these were considered to be supports fot the feared Capitalist system. The Church seemed to be attempting to justify on moral and spiritual grounds the exploitation of labour. If the power of the Church, with her appeal to the supernatural, were withdrawn, the Capitalist system would be weakened, and the coming of Socialism hastened.

The second ground on which Socialists were receptive to the idea of 'free religion' is related to the wider question of the human-

itarian bias of the age. Historically, in Western Christendom, this took its rise in Christian culture, but, by the end of the nineteenth century much humanitarian sympathy had been cut off from its source. Many of those who "loved their neighbours as themselves" resented any suggestion that their sympathies were related to any belief in the supernatural. Anything not provable by the methods of natural science was mere superstition. The method of observation, experiment, deduction, and systhesis, so successful in physics and already so valuable in evolutionary biology, pointed the way to a method which would give rise to a Natural Religion based on the facts of human experience and free from the superstitions handed down from past ages.[1]

---

1. "Almost exactly three hundred years ago, Francis Bacon presented to the King his "Novum Organum", in which he explains what should be our method in seeking to add to our knowledge. This has since been developed into the recognised scientific method of exact observation and experiment. . . . When once the "New Method" had been explained and men began to apply it, then human knowledge began to accumulate rapidly. . . .

   The application of the "New Method" to the study of man himself has given us a fairly assured outline of the history of man from earliest times to the present, and we can now understand how his social customs, religions, virtues, etc., have developed to their present form. Naturally this is the branch of study with which we are most concerned, and that is why it forms the subject of the "Course of Study" outlined by F. J. Gould for the "Young Socialist" Education Bureau. Of course only a few of the graphic touches from such a history can be given to the younger pupils of our schools.

   Now, what was Froebel's new system but the application of Bacon's "New Method" to education? . . . The Socialist Sunday Schools recommended Froebel's methods of teaching.

   This view of education is generally accepted today, . . . Generally speaking, it is in the so-called "Moral Lesson" that this method in education is forgotten or neglected. It is precisely in such a lesson that we particularly apply it. . . . It has always been recognised as the basis of our method in our schools. . . . So we see the "New Method", first explained by Francis Bacon, provides us with the basis of our method of education as it provides us with the subject matter of education."

   -- from Chapter 2, Socialist Sunday Schools -- A Manual.

Many Socialists, whose activities were motivated by a sincere sympathy for the exploited and oppressed rather than a desire for revenge against injustice suffered personally, desired the fellowship provided by the church, and retained their ties; but the more their thinking became opposed to the established order of society, and the more critical they became of superstition and myth, the more uncongenial did they find their affiliations. When the Labour Church was formed they found a group which satisfied their need for fellowship and which, at the same time, accepted or even welcomed their unorthodox ideas. A non-theological church attracted them; a theological or dogmatic position would have been a barrier which would have kept a large number from joining.

The Socialists who opposed the church on the ground that its charitable works were vitiated by its acceptance of the social system which victimized labour, and those who could no longer accept the teaching of the Church and yet felt the need for the kind of fellowship which the churches provided, found in the Labour Church, with its claim to freedom of doctrinal belief, the kind of an organization they needed. It was in harmony with their social ideals. It provided a fellowship superior to that of a political party. It allowed expression of their unorthodox religious views. It was for them the 'ideal church'. When the Christian Churches began to accept radical criticism of capitalistic principles, and when it generally accepted a more scientific interpretation of its doctrines, a free, non-dogmatic 'Labour Church' was not so necessary and it lost a large measure of its support.

THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE

"God Is Our King"

The Labour Movement was more than an effort toward amelioriation; it contemplated the emancipation of labour from the subordinate position it occupied in industrial society. Individuals and groups were turning their attention to the social structure to try to learn how it was that society produced the rich who could exploit the poor and the poor who must bow before the rich.[1] Political parties were organized to register complaints about the injustices of living and working conditions, and to try to remedy these by implementing one or other of the theories of socialism. Many of these theories were economic and political, and much of the drive behind them was the seething discontent of the exploited. But woven throughout the whole movement was the belief that the labouring classes were suffering injustice, and that it was the natural right and religious duty of every fair-minded citizen to alter the system which permitted such social evil.[2] The fourth principle of the Labour Church aimed at keeping this latter element to the fore.

---

1. The statement of the Stockport Labour Church, though later, clearly expresses the idea of early socialists: "Unlike the average man, who traces all social problems to defects in the individual, he [Socialist] finds the solution to these problems in inherent defects in our social organization. He believes that individual salvation can only come through the salvation of Society." -- Stockport Labour Church Syllabus, 1909-10.
2. ". . . those who seek to further the movement are called upon to study and obey the laws by which God operates in the world. They are called upon to be no longer, as in the days of old, mere agitators demanding a hearing in the name of Humanity and Justice. It is required of them that they themselves should study by what means these principles can be made to prevail in human relations." -- Trevor in Prophet, October 1895, p. 154

This was to be done in two main ways.

Economic and political measures alone will not be sufficient; religious efforts of piety, divorced from the concerns of practical social life, will be equally without result. Only efforts in both directions harmonized into one campaign will transform society, and these efforts must be related to the Divine Will and Purpose.

The Labour Church called the attention of socialists to the ultimate supremacy of God in the affairs of human society, but at the same time disowned the orthodox views of theology. It claimed that God's laws ought to be obeyed, but denied the competence of the Churches to expound the true revelation. If we are to remake society according to the ideal of justice we must not limit ourselves by theory, religious or socialist. We must accept the fact that life is a growing thing. Through a religious method, akin to the scientific, we must learn God's laws, and try to obey them.

Trevor here uses the word 'law' in its scientific connotation and not in its politico-social context. It is the law which can be discovered by observation and experimentation, not the law which is the product of man's legislation. God's law is not something given by supernatural revelation to a great leader of the human race at some sublime moment in time past, and then transmitted from generation to generation. Rather, it is something which we learn from experience, something which is always living and growing, and something which we never know completely.

The significance of the fourth principle is that economic laws are ascribed to God in the same manner as are moral laws. It was not a new idea, for among parsons and priests there were many who

had long stated, in no uncertain terms, that the laws governing wealth and poverty were God's decrees, and that it was not in our power to change them, but only to accept them. What was important was the idea that society, as at that time organized, was in opposition to those laws; that man may be ignorant of them, and only able to discover them in the growing life of Socialism; and that man, as he learns what God's laws are, may co-operate with them in shaping the destiny of Society.

Underlying this thought seems to be some notion of an Evolutionary God who is working and growing and changing as the world evolves and develops. This thought is not worked out by Trevor but it seems to reflect a philosophic mood expressed by S. Alexander in the 1800's and developed in the twentieth century by Alexander, Lloyd Morgan, A. N. Whitehead and others. Trevor at least goes so far as to suggest that the only truth we can know is the present appearance of an ever growing and expanding life. We can share this life by co-operating with the forces of evolution, and may thus become conscious partners in shaping the destiny of our lives. On the other hand we may oppose these forces, and thus shut ourselves out from consciously sharing their life, but we can never defeat them.

> There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough hew them how we will.
>
> To understand the nature of this divinity, to live with it, to work with it -- that is true Religion; that is the supreme end of man. It is an infinite task, demanding infinite life to accomplish it. We can at least commence it upon earth. From this point of view Religion includes the whole of life -- all thought and all knowledge and all service as well as all affections and interests.[1]

---

1. Trevor, Prophet, September 1896, p. 142

Trevor believed that, behind this life of ours, eternal powers are in operation, working out the destiny of the race. What is generally known as Socialism, made as inclusive as one can wish, is but a part of the sum total of these forces, and a part which conceivably may be opposed to the prevailing direction. Even 'progressive' movements may be reactionary, for man does not always understand the relation between an individual or organization and human evolution. He may be out of harmony with the 'eternal ideals and principles'. Not until he becomes conscious of them and then becomes their active agent does he enter into their true life (Socialism). Until he can put his trust in God and his confidence in Divine laws economic changes which may come inevitably, will be of no worth to him. Without 'God-consciousness' organized political socialism can never bring him freedom, but only a new tyranny.[1] Therefore it is imperative that he should make every effort to become conscious of God and God's laws, that he may endeavour to obey them and to become their active agent in human society. Only in that way is he able to enter into the fullness of life which can be his. Apart from putting his own life into harmony and fellowship with God's, his efforts at becoming a social reformer are but the 'turning of the treadmill in the soul's prison-house'.[2]

---

1. P. H. Wicksteed - ". . . only a Labour Church can lead man; if it is not a church, the fruits of the Labour Movement will turn to ashes in the mouths of its followers" -- quoted by C. H. Herford, Philip Henry Wicksteed, p. 221.
2. J. Bruce Glasier, towards the end of his life said to his wife, Katherine St. John Conway: ". . . I realise now that Buddha must have seen what I have seen, only much more fully. . . . Similarly Socrates or Plato must have seen it, that glorious world of ideal life and they tried to share their experiences. . . . Jesus must have dwelled there! The Kingdom of heaven he called it. St. Paul won glimpses of it as I have done. They

One of the weaknesses of the Labour Church 'theology' and yet the strength of its appeal, was that the detailed explanation of what was meant by these generalizations was left to each individual to work out for himself. From Sunday to Sunday different speakers brought different ideas, perhaps contradictory to each other, from which the members gained inspiration. Various books and pamphlets were on sale at each service. Of course the choice of speakers, and the recommended books would always conform to a socialistic bias, but there was no further discernible unity. The only generalization possible is that the economic laws of God, never completely known by man, were believed to be those consistent with the human virtues of fraternity, justice, truth and happiness. Any further definitions were left to the individual members.

It is interesting to note how this fourth principle worked out in the life of the Labour Churches. First, with respect to God's economic laws:

1. From the platform of Labour Churches, leaders such as Ben Tillett, Thomas Mann, and Keir Hardie were given the opportunity to speak on political, economic, and trade union topics in re-

---

both taught in the terms of their Jewish faith and knowledge.
Saint Francis must have seen it and told it as a mediaeval Christian. Perhaps Dante and John Woolman, George Fox and Swedenborg also saw it. I feel that Mrs. Eddy and Annie Besant and many more have glimpsed the Glory as I have and have done their best to build a system of teaching and nobler life upon their inner vision. . . . The Kingdom of heaven is within you just as Jesus saw, and every human being is a son or daughter of God in embryo. Our work on earth is to realise our true selves, to make heaven on earth for all about us so far as we are able. That is where our Socialism comes from."
-- Katherine Bruce Glasier, The Glen Book, Workers Northern Publishing Co., Reprint Edition pp. 11f.

lationito ethical and religious principles.

2. Conferences were held on Political and Economic action. At these discussion and questions were encouraged and members were inspired to take more active parts in the organizations of their own choice.

3. Meetings were held to organize workers and to teach them how to organize unions; for example, the Labour Church organized the Manchester Mat Weavers and assisted with the formation of some other unions. The Leeds Labour Church put their premises at the disposal of the organizers of the Clothing Tailoresses Union. Among the organizers Labour Churchmen were prominent.

4. Study groups were organized to educate the workers. The first of these was a class in Political economy, but it was soon followed by classes in social history, trade unionism, etc.

5. Socialist Sunday Schools were formed for the younger children. These often included classes in economics.

6. The Labour Prophet and pamphlets distributed by the Labour Church gave an opportunity for publication and dissemination of the facts of economic affairs, such as strikes and lockouts, and for the propagation of socialistic theories which might explain these facts.

Secondly, with respect to God's moral laws:

1. 1. Again the platform was used. Speakers delineated the important moral virtues and encouraged the people to apply ethical standards to their methods of opposing social evils, and discouraged the use of methods which might become violent or dishonest.

2. Socials, teas, dances, dramatics, and other activities were made an integral part of the life of the churches, encouraging

good clean fun as part of a religious life.[1] These activities often had a high cultural value as well.

3. Many Labour Churches, without being intolerant, did all they could to further the cause of temperance. Even those churches who operated clubs where beer was sold looked with disfavour on its intemperate use.

4. The Labour Churches organized Socialist Sunday Schools for the moral instruction and training of the children.

5. Opportunities for mutual aid were given. Collections were received for strikers in various parts of the country. Money was collected to relieve the destitute and to give victimized labourers a fresh start. Visitation of the sick was organized and various co-operative schemes were encouraged.

The fourth principle of the Labour Church tried to make explicit in thought and action one of the main implications of its first principle. If "God is in the Labour Movement" then all Labour's problems, indeed all Labour's activities, are of religious significance. There can be no division into secular and sacred; the wage which a man earns is a much a matter of religion as is the hour he spends in prayer; the conditions which surround his life are as much the concern of God as is the kind of life he lives. All things are saturated with divinity.[2] The economic conditions of society are

---

1. Vide supra, p. 114
2. Cf. H. C. Rowe, Labour Annual, 1895, pp. 42f.; "The Labour Church stands for . . . [the fact that] the abolition of irresponsible private monopoly in land and capital, together with the gradual rebuilding of national life on principles of national righteousness, is the work of God in our time, and that it is therefore the most truly religious business men could be about, whether they believe in God or not. . . . The tremendous importance of the economic basis . . . [of the Labour Church] lies

but the expression of social morality and stand in the same relation to God as do those things more commonly regarded as belonging to the realm of morality. Thus the Labour Church could not regard religion as a thing apart from the world; but went to the other extreme and almost identified it with the world.

Trevor, and many of those associated with him in the Labour Church, recognized a danger in mere political socialism. Men could become so absorbed in the practical problems and specific issues that they could lose sight of the larger life for which political action could merely provide the best conditions. If this were to happen Socialism might become another Tyrant, the more dangerous because it could dull the spiritual aspirations of the people by providing the means of physical comfort in abundance. The aim of the fourth principle was to prevent this profaning of the religious nature of all economic affairs, by calling attention to the Divine Will working itself out through Human Consciousness in the life of Socialism. It is interesting to note here that in the 1906 revision of the principles there is no mention of economic and moral laws of God. When the emphasis of the fourth principle was lost, the Labour Church gave up its distinctive emphasis and soon began its final decline. Before the turn of the century, however, the Labour Churches both recognized the importance of political and economic action, and realized that in itself such was not sufficient.

---

in the fact that by accepting it the movement is pledged to a definite economic policy. Other religious bodies, and many non-religious, would declare with equal fervour for truth and justice in the abstract; but the Labour Church takes upon itself to say, here and now in the concrete, tha t certain definite things are just and others unjust."

> . . . what is the Labour Church, but a recognition that, whereas we cannot be either saints or lovers or poets unless we have quite recently had something to eat, yet it is no use having anything to eat unless we are so far at least saints and lovers as to be true men living a human life.[1]

The Labour Church could not agree with the prevailing view of the Christian Churches that the important thing was individual righteousness and that the organization of society must be accepted as it is, and made the best of, regardless of how one might wish it otherwise.[2] Instead it called attention to the intimate relation and ultimate unity of the economic and moral views of man and his society, and called for basic reform all along the line. A. M. Thompson has caught something of this mood: The Labour Church

> . . . has come to fill, in this vast and whirling upheaval which we call the Labour movement, a most necessary function in checking and destroying that disposition to hatred, envy, and uncharitableness which is the almost inevitable concomitant of democratic reforming zeal. It has come to teach that the salvation of society must spring, not from greed, but the most earnest abhorrence of plunder; not from hatred, but from love -- love, passionate, clinging, yearning, for the beautiful old Mother-earth and all that exists, and grows, and lives on it; . . .[3]

The Labour Church realized that the emancipation of the means of life by economic reform would be of little use if men were not free to take advantage of these opportunities and to live the good life. But this leads us to a consideration of the fifth principle.

---

1. P. H. Wicksteed, quoted by C. H. Herford, Philip Henry Wicksteed, p. 221.
2. "The astounding anomaly of our time is the complete separation of religious principles from everyday industrial life. Spiritual pastors teach the young to regard God as the common Father; and when the young becomes of age to reflect upon the shameful inequalities created and maintained by our social system, they are discourgged by their elders from trying to alter it, and are treated as agitators and destroyers of the peace." -- Tom Mann, A Socialist's View of Religion and the Churches.
3. Prophet, November, 1893, p. 105.

THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE

"Thy Kingdom Come On Earth"

The Labour Movement had a "humanitarian eschatology"; it looked foreward to the establishment of the ideal society. This future state was pictured imaginatively in the various Utopias, and was called to mind by highly charged words and phrases repeatedly occurring in socialist propaganda. However, it was never clearly defined in scientifically descriptive terms; it was always indicated in suggestive language which could arouse peoples hopes the more for its vagueness. Thus, when Trevor stated that

> . . . the development of Personal Character and the improvement of Social Conditions are both essential to man's emancipation from moral and social bondage

he appealed to an aspiration which was at the very core of the Labour movement.

An important aspect of this appeal was its negative suggestion. Man was to be <u>free</u> -- free from bondage, free from the fetters which had proved so irksome, free from his miserable past, and free to develop towards a satisfying future. What that future was to be was wisely left undefined; each person imaginatively pointed that picture for himself.

The fifth principle assumes that the attainment of one's ideal rests on the improvement of environment and on the elevation of character. The good life cannot be lived by the unfortunates who lack the essentials of livelihood;[1] nor by those who have everything money can buy if they lack the ability to use for the benefit of all

---

1. This point is well illustrated by Keir Hardie's <u>Can A Man Be A Christian On £1 A Week?</u>

the advantages conferred upon them. Society must be altered not only that there may be equal opportunity for all, but that each may be enabled to use his opportunity to the full, and for the common good. It was a recognition of this dual pathway to the "eschaton" that inspired the Labour Church, with its opposition to the traditions of the past and its yearning toward fulfillment in the as yet unknown future, to attempt to express the religious aspirations implicit in Socialism.

It was felt that the stress laid upon the nobility of character by orthodox Christian groups was right and good, so far as it went, and that the political demand for increased opportunity for Labour was also good, so far as it could go, but that it was only in a combination of the two that any real progress could be made. A reformed society would require an honourable and upright citizenry; a truly righteous life would be impossible except in a fair and equitable society. Neither by itself is sufficient; a harmony of the two is essential. The Labour Church felt it had found that union in its concept of the "Religion of the Labour Movement".

In both its message and its activities the Labour Churches tried to keep this double emphasis before the whole Socialist movement. Perhaps this is one reason why Tom Mann was such a popular lecturer. He could keep the two aspects in balance:

> We have a glorious and inspiring work in hand -- nothing less than the purifying of the industrial and social life of our country and the making of true individuality. For, let it be clearly understood, we Labour men are thoroughly in favour of the highest possible development of each individual.[1]

Trevor expressed the double objective rather vividly in an edit-

---

1. Tom Mann, A Socialist's View of Religion and the Churches, p. 14

orial entitled: "What the Labour Church is For".

I have before me the last number of the Labour Leader. On the front page is a cartoon which represents, with brutal frankness, the terrible plight of Labour, "Fallen among Thieves".

Priest and Levite, Pharisee, Scribe,
  Scornfully pass him by,
Some with a shallow, mocking jibe,
  Some with a pious sigh.
Blindly he gropes in the dark and grieves,
Throttled by law between two thieves.

Hideous figures on either side of Labour are robbing their poor victim, who, meanwhile, is unable to defend himself, because a third, behind him, has his hands at his throat. The Landlord and the Capitalist rob, while the Law strangles.

It is a revolting picture. I know Landlords and Capitalists and Lawyers, generous, warm-hearted, and godly, who are as far as possible in appearance from the hateful figures here.

The Labour Church stands for the truth of that picture, nevertheless, against all appearances. Edward Carpenter's lines to the people of England are not too strongly worded:-

Over your face a web of lies is woven,
  Laws that are falsehoods pin you to the ground,
Labour is mocked, its just reward is stolen,
  On its bent back sits Idleness encrowned.

* * * * * *

So it is that the Labour Church stands side by side with the Labour Party in the struggle which is going forward to set Labour free from the robbers and garotters who attack and spoil and wound and kill him on God's highway of life.

But the Labour Church stands for much more than this.

* * * * * *

I have before me, lying by the side of the Labour Leader cartoon, an extract from a sermon by the Rev. Richard Armstrong, B.A., of Liverpool, taken from the columns of the Inquirer. Here it is:-

> We are living in restless times. Bustle and hurry are all about us. The din of the life which men call practical is in our ears. We have to take our part in it, and we do well to take our part in it. Is there, nevertheless, a chamber in our souls where the temple music still is lifted up, and daily prayer ascends to God on high?

In taking its part in this struggle for Labour, not in any mere class interest, but in the interest of Brotherhood and

Humanity, the Labour Church -- must I say the ideal Labour Church? -- stands also for the inward life pictured for us here.

It is a tremendous idea, this, to combine, with the ugly revolt of Labour going on to-day, the highest sanctities of the inner life, and "the peace of God which passeth all understanding".

But it is no new idea. Jesus realised it. . . .

* * * * * *

It is for this life of outward conflict with the world and inward communion with God that the Labour Church stands . . .

. . . to take part in the struggle with Ignorance, Indifference, and Greed, and yet to retain a Temple of God in the heart; to hear the cry of the poor and go forth to relieve it, and yet to withdraw to the smiling hills and find a Living Presence there -- this, among other things, is what the Labour Church stands for . . .[1]

Though the bondage to which the fifth principle refers is never clearly defined, examples are frequently pointed out. Such social fetters reveal two elements which may be generalized:

1. Every able bodied person ought, by his labour, to be able to provide for himself and his dependents. If he is not able to do this, through no fault of his own, then he is in bondage to the system which prevents him. If his bargaining power with respect to the sale of his labour is not enough to enable him to attain a living wage, and if he cannot refrain from selling his labour because he would then lack even the means of bare sustenance, then he is not free. He depends on the mercy of another for his very life.

2. The labour which each worker performs has a value greater than the wage he receives. This extra value is claimed by the owners of the means of production and is used to provide generously the means of life and luxury to themselves and to keep the masses reduced to just that state of subsistence where they will be glad to accept the

---

1. Prophet, October 1894, p. 133.

terms which the employers offer. The workers' bondage is made more severe by contrast with the power and ease of the masters' "freedom".

Social bondage was related to Labour's lack of bargaining power and to Capitalistic ownership of the means of production. The Trade Union movement believed that emancipation could come from the release of the former fetters. The out-and-out socialists insisted that the latter chains were the important ones to break. The Labour Churches made no choice between these two emphases in the Labour movement, but accepted both and welcomed any measures which aimed at 'emancipation'.

"Moral bondage" was even less clearly defined than the social variety. There was a mild feeling of revolt against convention, particularly if it could be related to class consciousness or snobbishness, but there was very little agitation against anything connected with morality. There were those in the Labour Movement who deliberately set aside accepted moral sanctions,[1] but there was little evidence of this in the Labour Churches. Here the concern was rather to sustain the accepted code. There was little fear of the confining effect of accepted British moral standards.

The moral bondage seems to have been taken to signify "respectability". Certainly members were willing to do things by which they may have sacrificed the good opinion of some neighbours and

---

1. "Dr. Aveling and Eleanor Marx Aveling, Marx's daughter, destined, both of them, for tragedy -- thanks to Aveling, a scoundrel with dangerous personal charm -- refused on principle to be married, and disclosed their views on marriage in a pamphlet The Woman Question ('We contend that chastity is unhealthy and unholy.' they wrote.) Belford Bax's essays would show him to be 'a ruthless critic of current morality'. Even Edward Carpenter would, in due time, give occasion for scandal." -- Godfrey Elton, England Arise, p. 91.

employers. They took part in strikes, parades, open air meetings, and Sunday recreation; women rode bicycles and spoke at political gatherings. In fact, it was a rather unconventional thing even to belong to a Labour Church. Perhaps there was a certain satisfaction in "shocking" prudish neighbours, but "daring unconventionalism" was an evidence of changing ideas, which may have been foreshadowing a changing concept of morality itself. At the time, however, it was just a protest against Victorian mores.

Trevor may have had personal reasons for thinking of conventional morality as a form of bondage, as the events of his later life would indicate, but these were not in evidence when the Labour Church was formed, nor is there evidence of them in his later connections with the Labour congregations. To the members of the Labour Church the phrase seemed to express merely a general attitude to those conventions that were associated in some definite way to class consciousness and the struggle for emancipation and equality.

The theology of the Labour Church would not be complete without a survey of what was meant by the two positive phrases which appear in this fifth principle, namely the "development of Personal Character" and the "improvement of Social Conditions".

"Personal Character" was a phrase which appealed to British workmen. It had an overtone of Individualism which minimized the less desirable aspects of Collectivism. Perhaps it was an effect of the "Non-conformist Conscience", but whatever its source, there was a very strong English bias that pure Marxian socialism could not overcome. This the Labour Church incorporated into its very foundational principles.

There was very little said about what was involved in "Personal

Character". Apparently it was something which all people knew and recognized; the only Labour Church teaching about it was that it was a growing thing. If one wished, one could develop character in one's self (and could help others to the degree that they would co-operate) but essentially it was something each acquired individually as each developed according to his inherent capacities.

In all of the articles and editorials on this subject Labour churchmen are delightfully vague. The following is one of Trevor's typical descriptions:

> The marriage of the body and the soul; the wholesome discipline of the flesh over the spirit, as of the spirit over the flesh; the emancipation, too, of each by each; the attainment of this divine harmony in us as the accepted end of our earthly life, so that all education and all culture find their aim in that; and then old age coming on, naturally and beautifully, as the gradual putting off of the flesh, lovingly and reverently folded up and laid aside, as the mother folds up and lays aside the little garments that her child has now outgrown; the whole world, too, accepted as the body is accepted, for the discipline and emancipation of the whole man, it, too, laid aside at last, with the same love toward it, and the same reverent gratitude for its use -- the full and free communion of life, no part left out, the body taken up into fellowship with the soul, the dual man thus formed entering into fellowship with Humanity, with Nature, with God; our earthly existence growing ever towards this divine harmony, some chords of it now and again surprising us on our way, the very memory of them being more real to us than the every-day facts of our phenomenal life -- have we not here the living realities of a perfectly Natural Religion, in which the ideals of Christianity and the ideals of Paganism blend and merge into a larger whole? And have not Christianity and Paganism been equally steps in "the education of God" towards this larger life?[1]

P. H. Wicksteed has expressed some of the conditions involved in the "full" life, but again the description falls short of what one could wish.

> . . . the man who has recognised the Labour Movement as a Religious Movement cannot work primarily or exclusively for his own personal advantage. . . . And inseparably cánnected with this

---

1. Trevor, Quest, pp 49f.

will come the recognition that no material acquisitions made by the masses, however nobly they may have been won, can in themselves open up to Humanity any life that is truly worth living; and . . . a life truly worth living is already in some degree accessible. . . .

. . . the great danger to the Labour Movement lies in the belief that all the evils of life may be removed by the readjustment of Social and industrial machinery. . . . the Labour Church is an open recognition of the fact that the ultimate conditions of Strength and happiness lie in our personal relations to each other, to nature, and to God, which no social machinery can, in itself, harmonise.[1]

Again we may conclude that the very vagueness had its importance. Because definitions and descriptions of Personal Character were never specific, each person was free to interpret according to his own ideas and desires. The appeal was widened because each person could add the material which was according to his own liking.

The demand for improvement of "Social Conditions" was much more definite; the Labour Church advocated in broad outline what the S. D. F., the Socialist League, the I. L. P., and to a degree the Labour Representation Committee, included in their platforms. The sympathies of the Church were particularly with its closest political associate, the I. L. P., whose program demanded:

1. Restriction by law of the working day to eight hours.
2. Abolition of overtime, piecework, and the prohibition of the employment of children under fourteen.
3. Provision for the sick, disabled, aged, widows and orphans, the necessary funds to be obtained by a tax upon unearned incomes.
4. Free, unsectarian, primary, secondary and university education.
5. Remunerative work for the unemployed.
6. Taxation to extinction of unearned incomes.
7. The substitution of arbitration for war and the consequent disarmament of the nations.[2]

and whose object was:

---

1. P. H. Wicksteed, What Does The Labour Church Stand For?, p. 11.
2. The Aim and Program of the I. L. P.

> . . . to secure the collective ownership of all the means of production, distribution and exchange.[1]

But the Labour Church tried to keep itself separate from the I. L. P. and thus did not advocate a detailed platform. Wherever it found injustice it took up the cause of the unfortunate and the downtrodden. It concerned itself with wage disputes, with the condition of housing, with the feeding and educating of slum children, with the elimination of dangerous conditions of employment, and with innumerable cases of victimization, all of which played such a big part in early Labour activities and propaganda. In all these, the concern of the Labour Church was with the emotional attitude or sentiment which underlay and which was common to all the political programs of socialism. It gathered together in one fellowship a number who were conscious of a grouping towards a new and ideal society where men could find fullness of life.

C. H. Herford has summarized this fifth principle in his brief definition of what the Labour Church ideal was:

> Trevor's 'idea' was simply this: Labour, debarred from the churches frequented by the privileged 'possessors', and serving as organs of the existing order, should have a church of its own, in which the fundamental aim of the Labour movement, to reorganize society in the interest of the underprivileged producer, if not actively promoted, should be taken for granted; while, at the same time, in the words of one of his oldest supporters, the individual worker would be "led to a truer individualism . . . in the effort to develop the highest capacity of his own soul, and to become a channel for the divine spirit which exists in every man.[2]

---

1. The Aim and Program of the I. L. P.
2. C. H. Herford, Philip Henry Wicksteed, p. 220; the oldest friend and supporter was H. V. Herford, and the words are quoted from A Democratic Religion, c. 1902. A thorough search, using the facilities of the British Library Association, has failed to locate a copy of this book, pamplet, or article. C. H. Herford's papers do not indicate where he obtained a copy.

REVISION OF THE LABOUR CHURCH PRINCIPLES

"Work Is Worship" [1]

The first Labour Church Union Conference (July, 1893) adopted Trevor's five principles as part of the constitution. Though there were frequent attempts at revision, they remained unchanged for many years. The sixth Conference (May, 1897) abolished the constitution altogether, so, till 1904, the principles had no official status. In that year a new constitution was adopted which restored them as the basis of union. Immediately many proposals for revision were presented, mainly by Birmingham congregation, suggesting a more secular and a more distinctly socialistic statement. Though most of these amendments were lost, a few were accepted each year, till by 1906 the main form of the revised principles was set, with only changes in wording and name occurring in the succeeding years.

After the revision "divine evolution" was no longer foundational in the first principle; nor was the claim made that the Labour Movement was a Religious Movement. The statement was simply made that

> "The Labour Church exists to give expression to the Religion of the Labour Movement."

Religion was now a supplementary notion that could be called upon to bolster what was essentially a political movement. There is here a reflection of the failure of the Labour Church to carry its early ideal into the lives and the thinking of its members.

Early in the twentieth century the Labour Church gave up the claim of being a classless religion, and frankly became a working-class Church. This is indicated by the omission of the second principle (1904 or earlier) and the change of name to "Socialist

---

1. This 'official' motto was adopted in 1899.

and Labour Church Union" (suggested frequently but not adopted, as an option, till 1909, nor, as the official name, till 1910).

The many attempted revisions of the third principle provided more debate at the Labour Church Conferences than any other subject, perhaps because it was here that secularists came into conflict with Christians. Birmingham, supported by Hyde and Watford wanted to delete the section entirely, while another group headed by Bradford resisted all secularist tendencies. The revisions accepted each year were compromises in which every word and phrase had been hotly contested. The successive revisions show a gradual shift from Trevor's idea of a developing religion to an attitude of toleration for other people's beliefs.

The revision of the fourth principle shows the secularist tendencies at work; reference to the Divine Will is omitted. It also shows the politico-economic socialist influence, for the establishment of the Socialist Commonwealth becomes the main objective. This too was the subject of long debate and numerous amendments. At one stage it was the establishment of the 'Co-operative Commonwealth'; it then became: 'Socialism -- a Co-operative Commonwealth'; finally the word 'Co-operative' was deleted.

The revision of the fifth principle again illustrates the shifting emphasis towards a secularist and a merely humanitarian position. Personal Character and Social Conditions are still important, but the Economic and Moral laws of God become 'forces of society'. Emancipation from moral and social bondage is no longer a matter of obedience to either divine or natural law; it has become a matter of manipulation of social forces.

The revision of the Labour Church principles did not change the

theological position; it only shifted the focus within the position outlined by Trevor. The secular elements were emphasized; the theistic elements were suppressed. The idea of evolutionary development was minimized; the socialistic elements were made more specific. Trevor would not object to anything stated in the revised form, though he would mourn the loss of religious feeling. In later years he told his son Stanley that he had lost interest in the Labour Church largely because it tended to become merely a Sunday meeting of Trade Unionists and so lost its religious character.

The following is a statement of the revised principles, (as published in 1906), in parallel column with the original principles:

THE ORIGINAL PRINCIPLES	THE 1906 REVISION
1. That the Labour Movement is a Religious Movement.	1. That the Labour Church exists to give expression to the Religion of the Labour Movement.
2. That the Religion of the Labour Movement is not a Class Religion, but unites members of all classes in working for the Abolition of Commercial Slavery.	2. That the Religion of the Labour Movement is not theological,[1] but respects each individual's personal convictions upon this question.
3. That the Religion of the Labour Movement is not Sectarian or Dogmatic, but Free Religion, leaving each man free to develop his own relations with the Power that brought him into being.	3. That the Religion of the Labour Movement sees the realisation of universal well-being by the establishment of Socialism -- a Commonwealth founded upon Justice and Love.

---

1. This amendment came by the following sequence: 1904, That the Religion of the Labour Movement is not Sectarian or necessarily theological; 1905 . . . is not necessarily theological; 1906 . . . is not theological.

4. That the Emancipation of Labour can only be realised so far as men learn both the Economic and Moral Laws of God; and heartily endeavour to obey them.

5. That the development of Personal Character and the improvement of Social Conditions are both essential to man's emancipation from moral and social bondage.

4. That the Religion of the Labour Movement declares that the improvement of Social Conditions and the development of Personal Character are both essential to emancipation from Social and Moral bondage, and to that end insists upon the duty of studying the economic and moral forces of Society.

Ah! the wrong that might be righted
If we could but see the way!
Ah! the pains that might be lightened
Every hour and every day!
If we would but hear the pleadings
Of the hearts that go astray.

Let us step outside the stronghold
Of our selfishness and pride;
Let us lift our fainting brothers,
Let us strengthen ere we chide;
Let us, ere we blame the fallen,
Hold a light to cheer and guide.

-- L.C. Hymn Book No. 38

CHAPTER VI

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IDEA

Francis Herbert Stead, then Warden of Browning Hall, London, said in 1895: The Labour Movement,

> . . . the voice of Labour claiming as his the heritage of humanity . . . is the great fact of the time.[1]

Labour, claiming its heritage in education, culture, politics, and religion, was rising to an awareness of its power. The movement, though often hostile to Church and Chapel alike, was basically religious in outlook.

> For parsons and for churches they may have scant respect; but they have reverence for religion; they have reverence for Christ. . . . "Nunquam" is all for religion: not a religion of dream or of ritual; but a religion human and practical to the core; a religion that shall act out of the spirit of Jesus' words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." . . . Mr. Keir Hardie . . . is an avowed Christian. . . . Tom Mann; he only narrowly escaped becoming a clergyman in the Church of England: . . . the Moses of the Dockers, who has given his life to leading them out of the house of bondage toward the promised land, my friend, Alderman Ben Tillett. He, too, is a confessed Christian. Tillett, Mann, Hardie, are no strangers to the pulpit; they are preachers of the Christian Religion, and from it draw the motive of their lives.[2]

This testimony, with but little qualification[3], accurately characterizes the Labour Movement of the nineties; it was religious.[4] But if

---

1. F. H. Stead, The Labour Movement In Religion, p. 3.
2. Ibid, pp. 4f.
3. Most clergymen were not so generous in ascribing the Christian faith to Labour Leaders. They admired dedication and appreciated lives of dedicated service, but were critical of the humanitarian and secularist views associated with the Labour Movement. Pope Leo's Rerum Novarum (1891) recognized the religious character of Socialism, and so was critical of its non-Christian aspects.
4. "The Socialist Labour Movement has always been of an essentially religious character, both in England and on the Continent, more especially in Germany. It has invariably had the power of appeal,

we should think of it as distinctly Christian, we should be in error. The origin and motive of British socialism was strongly influenced by Christian thought, but its expression more often than not was in conflict with orthodox doctrine.

> There is, among the workers of the land, a great and rising tide of religious life. It runs very largely outside of all the churches, established or non-established. It has been flowing waste and wide, without proper means of outlet. There are signs that it is washing out channels for itself. There are movements which the workers themselves have adopted for expressing their religious life.
>
> You have heard of the Labour Church. We may not like everything about the Labour Church, but both name and thing show the religious instinct at work.[1]

F. H. Stead has here indicated the outstanding characteristic of the Labour Churches. They were the spontaneous response of a section of British society to Trevor's message: "God is in the Labour Movement!". Those who were clinging but feebly to Christian doctrine because they knew of no alternative saw promise of hope.

---

not only to the intellect of man, but to his very soul. On the one side it offers him an ideal, the ideal of a new humanity; on the other it shows him the advantages of taking a certain definite step towards the realisation of that ideal. It is inspired by a moral enthusiasm and an intellectual power which will ultimately give it strength to transform European Society." -- H. C. Rowe, in the Labour Annual, 1895, pp. 42f.

"Already the dawn is breaking. . . . A new voice is struggling for utterance among them. . . . As yet its voice is uncertain, its step unsteady, its way not clear before it; but listen to its cry! "Take away our oppression! . . . Give us justice!" But justice by what standard? There is already justice by the law. "Give us liberty!" By what standard? There is already liberty by the law. Alas, it is not this justice that is sought -- a justice that gives one the right to live idle upon another's labour. It is not this liberty -- a liberty by which the strong are made free to prey upon the weak!

"Something other than this is meant. Instinctively, unconsciously, the labour movement is appealing not to any human saw, but to the eternal laws by which all human laws are overruled, and is demanding to be governed by these. This is the great heart of humanity groping after God." -- "Elihu" (Samuel Washington) in the Prophet, November, 1892, p. 86. Cf. Blatchford's The New Religion.

1. F. H. Stead, The Labour Movement in Religion, p. 5.

They welcomed the proposition of a church of justice and brotherhood devoid of ritual and creed which would plead the cause of Labour.[1] They found confidence in Trevor's assertion that

> Christianity is only a form of religion, and that they may give it up entirely, and then find a truer, fuller, and more satisfying religion arise in its place.[2]

But the main thing was not Trevor's appeal; it was the mood of the people who responded to it.

That response was to something conceived as new, though the novelty was more from the side of the working-classes but newly made conscious of their own possibilities rather than any introduction of ideas hitherto unknown. The 'novelty' is analagous to the awakening of a late sleeper whose day begins with the sun already high in the heavens. Taking this as our clue, we shall consider the Labour Churches as one among many expressions of a 'New Science', a 'New Sympathy', a 'New Conscience', a 'New Life, and a 'New Faith'.

The New Science:

The membership of the Labour Churches was largely drawn from young working-class men and women, mostly those in their twenties, with only a few over forty. They were people who had learned to read and write because of the extension of primary education. Education seemed to them to be a gate to a new world from which their

---

1. "The Churches all agree to differ about the significance of events which occurred eighteen centuries since. We want to inaugurate an up-to-date Religion. The talk of the Churches is of Jesus -- all the time. Ours is of Burns, of Mann, of Hardie. The talk of the Churches is of the man who fell among thieves; ours is of the Hull strike, and we take collections for the Dockers. A vulgar, commonplace Religion! Yes, just as that of Jesus was eighteen centuries since -- a Religion without upholstery." -- Trevor, Prophet, June 1893, p. 49.
2. Quest, p. 77.

parents had beenn forbidden entry. To make the best of their opportunities they read books, attended study classes, and listened to the speakers who travelled up and down the land disseminating the new science and winning people from the 'unscientific' doctrines and creeds of the churches. The net result was a wide-spread skeptical attitude leading to philosophical and religious agnosticism informed by an only half understood and much oversimplified theory of evolution.

There were many whose intellectual faith had been weakened or shattered by the 'new science', yet who had an experience and knowledge of practical faith that could not be denied. They could not reconcile themselves to what they considered the naive and superstitious claims of orthodox Christian doctrine, yet they could not accept a complete atheism or a merely secularist approach. They were ready to accept a church which proclaimed a religion consistent with science.[1]

The solution of the dilemna of science versus faith was often a relegation of religion to the realm of sentiment and feeling. Occasionally consciously, but more frequently quite unconsciously, people accepted the notion that 'moral enthusiasm' was the proper realm and scope for religion -- that theology, doctrine, and creed could be ignored as entirely irrelevant. Truth, so far as a know-

---

1. "Religion, to be an emancipating force, must be as free from Tradition as Science is. The new wine cannot be poured into old bottles without being spoiled." -- Trevor, Prophet, October 1894, p. 137. Trevor's attitude has similarities to that of Engles as stated in the Preface to the 1888 edition of the Communist Manifesto: "This proposition, which, in my opinion, is destined to do for history what Darwen's theory has done for Biology, we, both of us, had been gradually approaching for some years before 1845."

ledge of it was required for practical life, would be discovered by science, and applied by a scientific philosophy. A creedless faith, required to give people a motive for maintaining high ethical standards, was accepted as a reasonable and desirable expedient.

Sir George Reid, referring specifically to attitudes which became characteristic of the early twentieth century, made an observation which is equally true of that section of the working classes with which we are dealing:

> It may be observed, however, that in matters of theology the working man-- with exceptions, of course, -- is not exacting. Given a spiritual guide of exemplary life who understands working-class people and is prepared to champion their point of view, the ordinary workman is not likely to hold aloof because of subtleties of doctrine.[1]

While we have discussed this "New Science" largely in terms of the dissemination of Spencerian ideas of Evolution it must not be overlooked that Utilitarian philosophy, particularly of the school of Bentham and Mill, was then permeating the thinking of the populace, and providing a predisposition of skepticism toward matters of transcendental faith. Faith like every other commodity and activity, must be evaluated in terms of its contribution to the over-all well-being and happiness of the greatest number. The Utilitarian presuppositions, supplemented by the exciting new ideas of a scientific account of Evolution made many people quite dissatisfied with the standard doctrinal and creedal formulations of the Christian Churches. Into the vacuum thus created came a host of new religions and sects.

The New Sympathy:

The History of nineteenth century Britain may be written in

---

1. Sir George T. Reid "The Human Side of Industry" in The Character of England, edited by Ernest Barker, p. 178.

terms of a growing humanitarian sympathy for the victims of oppression. The Poor Laws, the Factory acts, the Freeing of the Slaves, Prison reform, the establishment of Barnardo homes, and the spread of philanthropic projects are all evidences of this evern enlarging trend. By the end of the century this motive had influenced large sections of the working classes. Trade Unionists who had previously been concerned mainly with their own crafts, the protection of their own wages and conditions of work, and with the benefits of their mutual aid societies, developed a concern for the unskilled and unorganized general labourers; New Unionism came into being. Whenever workers were being severely exploited, there were collections and a general 'liberality' which enabled strike action to be maintained. Where there was unemployment, working class people gave willingly of their little that others, even in distant parts, might not be compelled to accept the horrors of the "poor house".[1] Whenever the lot of the children of the slums was given any publicity there arose a determination to do something for them to enable them to rise above their hideous and squalid surroundings. "Cinderella" received generous working-class support.

The Labour Churches were, in some aspects, an expression of this new sympathy for the 'bottom dog'.[2] The victims of com-

---

1. "Poor Houses" were referred to in Seed-time, Oct. 1894, p. 5 as the: "Workhouse whereunder men's emasculated lives are charitably murdered in pauperism."
2. R. A. Beckett wrote in criticism of attitudes of John Burns: that the object of Labour Churches was to " . . . steadily point to the ideal of a happy human life for all, and make men divinely discontented, not merely with their own lot, but with that of others more wretched than themselves, . . ." Prophet, Feb. 1897, p. 19.

mercial slavery were to be emancipated and all were to be given the possibility of developing their innate capacities. The New Religious Faith demanded that church life should be practical; that the religion which did not issue in a ministry to the suffering and the relief of distress should be treated as mere cant and insincerity.[1]

In actual life situations the Labour Churches, as institutions, succeeded (and failed) to put the new sympathy into practice in philanthropic projects to the same degree as the churches they criticized, partly because of the innate difficulties of corporate action, and partly because the emphasis was placed on the New Conscience which should eventually make all philanthropy unnecessary.

The New Conscience:

The Labour Movement became very critical of Philanthropy on two counts: 1. It tended to become a patronizing gesture on the part of the wealthy toward the 'less respectable' members of society, and 2. It tended to deal only with symptoms and to leave the causes unaffected. The Labour cry was not merely an expression of sympathy for the oppressed -- it was a cry of anguish at the injustice involved; and a demand for fair play. It was an assertion of the dignity of the poorer resident of the slums and a claim that he had as much right to the wealth of the nation's land and resources as any squire or mill owner. Nay! That he had more right, for he had contributed through his labour more than had the landlord through his extraction of rent or the capitalist through the im-

---

1. Cf. Robert Blatchford, "What I Mean by Socialism", Appendix pp 657 f.

posing of interest and profit. Socialism was the way of satisfying the new conscience. The Labour Church with its claim that "God is in the Labour Movement" and that Socialism was the "growing point" of Godward evolution was bringing powerful sanctions to the feelings of the justice of Labour's claims, and stimulating a practical reaction to the injustices inherent in the capitalist system.

The sense of bondage, real or imagined, was an important aspect of Labour's awakening self-consciousness. Hours of factory work created a slavery which denied the leisure which factory hands knew was enjoyed by the middle classes.[1] Low wages were felt as heavy chains, for in the urban surroundings of the new industries every activity required money.[2] The attitudes of Victorian society which would keep each person in "his own station-in-life" was felt as one of the strongest bonds of all. Even if an artisan could save enough money to pay the pew-rent of a "better seat" in the chapel, he would be snubbed and made to feel his terrible breach of etiquette.[3] Indeed, the working classes so felt this social "atmosphere" of the

---

1. The working day for many was 12 hours, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year, though most did have a Sabbath rest. The end of the shift, because of sheer physical fatigue, meant sleep and not leisure. If a break in the continual round of work did come, it was the result of unemployment, and it brought with it the terrible fear of the workhouse, and "freetime" was filled with the vain search for fresh employment. Cf. Wm. Gallacher's comments, Appendix p.
2. A man's wage was insufficient to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter for a family, so other members, including mother, had to bring in an income too. Children shared the housekeeping costs by selling matches and running errands and, as soon as they were old enough, by getting permanent employment. But still drastic economies that undermined health and happiness were an absolute necessity. Little could be spared for enjoyment or for educational and cultural development.
3. Pew renting, though severely criticized by leaders of religious thought, was continued by the congregations largely as one more buttress to "social status".

Churches and Chapels alike[1] that their lack of attendance was a real problem to all denominations. When a Church appeared in which they could assume membership and even be elected to office without being made to feel their inferior position, it is not surprising that there was a response such as the Salvation Army and the Labour Churches received. Here were means of breaking the traditional, but extremely powerful, bonds of "commercial slavery".

The need for "emancipation" was felt in other ways too. A person who became prominent in any working-class movement often found himself demoted to a lower paid job or out of employment entirely. It was not an uncommon experience for a person elected to public office on an I. L. P. ticket to find himself dependent upon a charitable fund set up by the party or by the Labour Church.

One could write many pages about this growing consciousness among

---

1. Working-classes felt that Anglicanism was too closely associated with the landlord and feudal ideas, and that Non-conformist groups were too closely tied to their wealthy industrial supporters. Landlord and Capitalist both used all the power and influence at their disposal to maintain the status quo, and to prevent the working-classes from "rising" through development of their intellectual and cultural capacities. This generalization applies mainly to the factory areas of the Midlands and the North. In London people had removed themselves so far from contact with the Churches that these attitudes of antipathy were not so prominent. In the rural areas and in the mining areas the Churches or Chapels were still "of the people" to a much greater degree. In Durham particularly the miners were loyal to the Wesleyan Chapels. Perhaps this was so because of the nature of mining communities, with their strong ties which make them in a sense sufficient unto themselves. Within the mining villages there was not developing middle class strong enough to 'commandeer' chapel policies to its own interests, and to estrange it from the colliery workers. It is interesting to note also that Durham miners remained old-style Unionists, and retained Liberal allegiance in politics. There were few I. L. P. branches and few Labour Churches formed in the Mining areas. Cf. G. D. H. Cole, Socialist Thought, Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 140. Cf. also the writing of R. F. Wearmouth and Bishop Oxnam.

working people that opportunities were being denied them, but perhaps it is better to turn our attention to their ideas of what Emancipation would bring them.

The New Life:

When the idea of Socialism burst upon the last decade of the nineteenth century it came as a promise of a new life. It had been heralded by a society: "The Fellowship of the New Life" (out of which came the beginnings of the Fabian Society). Its publication Seed-time seemed to suggest early spring just before the warm sun should awaken life. If one were to carry the analogy further one might suggest that the Labour Churches were among the little green shoots of the Nursery crop that provided shelter for the more permanent pasture that was to appear later.

It is difficult to write concisely about this aspect of the Labour Church. There is a tendency to write voluminously about vague aspirations as did Trevor and others who tried to deal with it. On the other hand, if one contemptuously dismisses the subject as after all being mere sentiment, one could not fairly evaluate the response of the people to Labour Church ideas. There was a yearning, not usually articulate, for a new sense of purpose which should transform life. This became evident in two ways:

1. The first was a personal experience akin to conversion. We can easily see this in the reports which Trevor quotes from his early correspondence[1]. It can be seen in the testimony given in the correspondence quoted in the appendix.[2] By implication it

---

1. Cf. Evelyn March-Phillips, The Spectator, April 21, 1894 and Trevor, The Prophet
2. Cf. Appendix pp. 699-738

it can be seen in the mood of disillusionment which so characterizes the present survivors[1] and which probably in part explains why autobiographical evidence of the Labour Churches is so difficult to find.[2]

2. The second was in an apocalyptic Faith that a few years of preaching, the election of a few socialistic candidates to parliament, the introduction of universal education, and the Utopia would be here.[3] For some the emphasis was on the amelioration of environmental factors. For others there was the recognition that personal integrity and character was basic. For a few there was the claim that both social and personal improvement rested upon a prior and fundamental spiritual basis. But for all there was the confidence that soon the perfect life and the perfect order of society would be achieved.

In the Labour Churches there were all shades of opinion as to

---

1. The author interviewed a number of these survivors. The attitude frequently encountered was: "The Labour Party isn't what it was in Labour Church days!"
2. For example a comparison of Robert Blatchford's autobiography, which makes little or no reference to the Labour Churches, with L. V. Thompson's authoritative biography would suggest that there was some reason of importance to Blatchford to eliminate even casual reference to the Labour Churches which played such an important place in a period of his life. It seems likely to me that disillusionment, rather than lack of importance, as Inglish claims in his thesis "The English Churches and the Working Classes -- 1880 - 1900" (Nuffield College, Oxford), enters into this curious silence concerning various people's activity in the Labour Churches. The work which they later considered to be important could be covered by their references to the I. L. P., while the specifically religious attempt to stand midway between the Secularist and the Christian was an embarrassment to both wings, and therefore, better forgotten.
3. Cf. Pelling, Thesis, p. 71 -- "The Labour Church came as a modern apocalyptic faith in the release from their chains and fetters." Note also the sense of disillusionment of people like Cooke ("How foolish we were to think that a few years lecturing would bring the 'New Day'"), and Palmer (Appendix pp. *67ff.*), etc.

what the New Life should be and as to how it should be obtained. Where they differed from their socialist brethren who were not interested in religion in any form was largely in the emphasis they placed on ethical concerns. They agreed that every Labour conscious Socialist should work for the political independence of Labour and for the introduction of reform legislation. They agreed that there could be no fundamental improvement till capitalistically orientated government was replaced by a socialist regime, but they differed by adding the proviso that political and economic reform alone would never be sufficient, that personal development of character was as esential as any campaign for votes.

For Trevor and the few who caught his larger vision there was the realization that ethics by itself could not develop either personal character or social reform. These few earnest people worked hard to spread their realization far and wide, but only with very moderate success. Their work may be counted among these factors which kept the British Labour Movement from becoming merely a materialistic theory of ethics and politics; but they failed to inspire the whole movement with a vital religious consciousness. It may be that Trevor's fear was realized:

> Of all the dangers threatening us this appears to us to be the greatest -- really the one serious danger -- that the means of living shall be realized more rapidly than the development of life. To save us from this catastrophy we need the strength and the inspiration of religion.[1]

The strength and inspiration of religion was to be supplied by the new creedless faith.

<u>The New Faith</u>

The Labour Churches were spontaneous attempts to express in living

---

1. <u>Prophet</u>, January 1892, p. 4.

fellowship the new faith required if the Labour Movement was not to become a mere class struggle in which Labour should wrest a larger share of the national wealth from an unwilling capitalist class. The fifth chapter of this work has been an attempt to point out the many and various strands -- not always logically related one to another -- which made up this faith. We shall now deal with it as a unity, a unity which it possessed as a feeling and which it retained because its complexity was left unexamined.

Henry Pelling suggests that

> The Labour Churches were symptomatic of the deep religious feelings of those who took part in the new political movement.[1]

which certainly would agree with Trevor's understanding:

> . . . The Labour Church is an organised expression of the individual relationship to God of the men and women in the Labour movement, and also of the collective relationship of the whole movement to the God working within it. This is what I understand to be the meaning of the term -- the religion of the Labour movement. But this religion must be absolutely free, . . .[2]

It agrees also with the understanding of convinced Labour Church workers in the various congregations throughout the land. A. W. Hildreth of Darlington, put it in these words:

> . . . the ideal of a Human Brotherhood, based upon perfect Justice and perfect Love. Where the orthodox churches ignore the material side of life, and the secularists had nothing positive to offer after destroying orthodox theology, the Labour Church is able to give, not the definite form of religion that can be expressed in a creed, but the spirit which is at the base of all religion.[3]

The Labour Churches generally did not have as deep a spiritual discernment as did Trevor and the few who shared his ideal. Their

---

1. Pelling, Thesis, p. 69
2. Trevor, Prophet, February, 1893, p. 14. Cf. also Prophet, October 1894, p. 133: "It is for the outward conflict with the world and the inward communion with God that the Labour Church stands."
3. Prophet, June 1896, p. 89

faith was rather a residue of Christian teaching that had somehow mistaken the ethic for the faith. One of the writers to the Labour Prophet puts foreward the following rather instructive suggestion:

> Socialism, as we have it today, is largely the natural outcome of a past Sunday School instruction, the true embodiment of the ethics of Jesus; the revolt against the Churches and their creeds, which we observe so strikingly in our ranks, being, to use a metaphor, nothing but the shaking off of the dust accumulated thereon during the ages. [1]

While it may be accurate to suggest that much Labour Church 'theology' was Christianity without the Christ or the Cross, we must point out that much of the 'Christian' teaching which went to make it up was even more 'second hand' than Sunday School instruction. On the other hand, there was less of the militant atheism and materialism of Karl Marx than might have been expected. David Lowe, referring specifically to the Scottish Labour Movement might well have been speaking of England when he claimed that it

> . . . was not founded on materialism. The instinct for freedom and justice which animated the Covenanters and Chartists also inspired the Nineteenth Century pioneers. Their teachers and prophets were Jesus, Shelley, Mazzini, Whitman, Ruskin, Carlyle, and Morris. The economists took a secondary place. The crusade was to dethrone Mammon and to restore spirit. [2]

Robert Blatchford's testimony agrees with that of Lowe:

> So far as our northern people are concerned I am convinced that beyond the mere outline of State-Socialism Karl Marx and his countrymen have had but little influence. No; the movement here, the new religion, which is socialism, and something more than socialism, is more largely the result of the labours of Darwin, Carlyle, Ruskin, Dickens, Thoreau, and Walt Whitman.

---

1. Prophet
2. David Lowe, Souvenirs of Scottish Labour, p. 125. Cf. also Prophet, April 1892, p. 28: Trevor refers to Whitman as 'nearer to God than any man on earth'; Sixsmith correspondence, Appendix p. 704; and Katherine Bruce Glasier, The Glen Book, Chapter VIII.

It is from these men that the North has caught the message of love and justice, of liberty and peace, of culture and simplicity, and of holiness and beauty of life. This new religion which is rousing and revivifying the North is something much higher and much greater than a wage question, . . . something more even than political or industrial liberty, though it embraces all these. It is a religion of manhood and womanhood, of sweetness and of life. As John Trevor said in the Labour Prophet: "It has not been to a mere economic theory merely that these converts have been introduced. It has been to a new life. Their eyes shine with the gladness of a new birth."

For this we are indebted to the idol breaking of Carlyle, to the ideal making of Ruskin, and to the trumpet tongued proclamation by the titanic Whitman of the great message of true Democracy and the brave and sweet comradship of the natural life -- of the stainless, verile, thorough human life, lived out boldly and frankly in the open air and under the eyes of God.[1]

The peculiarly English development of Socialism was distinctly 'ethical' with a religious flavour. Indeed it was regarded by its adherents as a religion in itself.[2] Many Labour leaders when asked their religion, answered "Socialism", and were willing to undergo imprisonment in witness to their convictions.[3] The 'New Faith' was theologically poverty stricken; it was eclectic; it had no specific creed. But it did have enthusiasm. It was the mission of the Labour Church to give expression to it. If it had been their custom

---

1. The New Religion, Clarion Pamphlet No. 20, p. 3. Cf. also -- Stockport Labour Church Syllabus, 1908-09, p. 45 - The ethics and philosophy of socialists ". . . are the development and sequel of the teachings of Buddha, Plato, Jesus, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. Their genius has illuminated every department of learning, culture, and refinement."
2. Cf. Stan Pierson, "Socialism and Religion, Their Interaction in Great Britain -- 1889 - 1911" (a Thesis at Harvard University).
3. Cf. Wm. Gallacher's comments, Appendix p.*731* and the following quotation from Parliamentary Debates, 5th series, V. 37, pp. 1864f.: "Keir Hardie asked the Sec. of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the cell card supplied to Mrs. Annie Swan of Glasgow, in cell 2-8E wing of Holloway Prison, set forth her religious belief as socialism; and whether it is proposed to provide a prison chaplain of that faith for other inmates of the same persuasion? Why, if every other form of religious belief has a chaplain, is Socialism debarred?"

to follow ecclesiastical usages, they would have said a reverent "Amen" to Trevor's statement of his life's purpose:

> About my own position there should be no misunderstanding. To bring a sense of God's presence into the hearts of a people, struggling towards freedom is the one aim of my existence. [1]

* * * * *

Before any fair evaluation of the Labour Churches can be made it must be recognized that they did not create any new ideas. They were retail rather than manufacturing concerns; their function was 'idea distribution' rather than 'idea production'. Their main service was to provide a means of communication. Through them people were able to find expression for attitudes and feelings which were largely inarticulate, but which nevertheless formed a basic part of their lives. Through them ideas came from the leaders of the Socialist Movement to the ears and understanding of common ordinary people, stimulating them to further activity.

In this section we shall appraise the services contributed by the Labour Churches. Their purpose was to express and develop the religion of the Labour Movement, so it will be in relation to this movement that their services will be considered.

Propaganda Service:

In the early days of the British Labour Movement the Labour Churches provided some of the best and most consistent platforms from which Socialism could be proclaimed. In many towns the S. D. F., the Fabians, and later the I. L. P. created Labour Churches for the Sunday platform they could provide, and therefore operated a

---

1. Prophet, December 1893, p. 122.

Go forth to life, O child of earth!
Still mindful of thy heavenly birth;
Thou art not here for care or sin,
But manhood's noble crown to win.
Thou passion's fires are in thy soul,
Thy spirit can their flames control;
Though tempters strong beset thy way,
Thy spirit is more strong than they.

Go on from innocence of youth
To manly pureness, manly truth;
God's angels still are near to save,
And God Himself doth help the brave.
Then forth to life, O child of earth,
Be worthy of thy heavenly birth!
For noble service thou art here,
Thy brothers help, Thy God revere!

-- Samuel Longfellow
L.C. Hymn Book No. 55

less complete program than is described in Chapter III. In an even greater number of towns the various Socialist groups would singly or in co-operation, hold a Sunday Meeting which differed from the more politically conscious of the Labour Congregations only in omission of the name.[1] In all of them there was the underlying idea that is was appropriate to sing Labour Hymns and to cultivate an atmosphere of religious enthusiasm.[2] For a few, such 'techniques' would be adopted purely because of their effectiveness, but for the majority, they were sincerely adopted without any sense of sacrilege.[3]

There were two disabilities of Socialist propaganda which the Labour Churches tended to lessen. There was a strongly ingrained attitude of Sabbath Observance which placed a taboo on Sunday political campaigning. Ken Inglis suggests, and evidence supports his contention, that many Socialist and Labour lecturers spoke with an easier conscience on Sunday evening if their sponsor was

---

1. The name Labour Church was used most often when members of various Socialist groups combined in Sunday activity. When one group alone conducted Sunday meetings the name 'church' was more frequently omitted.
2. Ethical and Religious themes such as "Was Jesus a Socialist" or "Politics in the Pulpit" were frequently topics at Sunday political meetings. Note also the resolution of the National Administrative Council of the I. L. P. (1894) that local groups conduct Sunday meetings along Labour Church lines.
3. S. G. Hobson, Pilgrim to the Left, p. 41: "Some of us supported the Labour Church for a practical reason. Everywhere there were loud complaints from Liberals and Conservatives that we were taking an unfair advantage in holding our meetings on Sunday; the Churches denounced us for depleting their pews. In vain our assurances that Socialism was our religion -- the religion of humanity. It was not very convincing. But when we founded our own church, dragging in an enticing clause from the Lord's Prayer as our basis, that particular criticism was silenced. They found they must meet us on theological grounds."

the Church and the occasion a religious service.[1] Certainly many people who would not attend a Sunday political gathering did flock to the Labour Churches to hear the nationally famous expositors of Socialism give the same lecture (though with a stronger emphasis on its ethical aspects) that had been given at a purely political meeting in another town on the previous evening.

The second disability was that many groups of people, notably women (who were indeed losing sympathy with their socialist minded men who were seldom at home to share the family concerns)[2] would take no part in politics at all.[3] But, in the Labour Churches there was a hall to which these people went, and heard the Socialist Gospel preached in a manner which could be accepted as 'non-political'.

Herbert N. Casson, an American Socialist "spell-binder" made a visit to England in 1897; he made a side circuit of lecture halls, including 'six or seven' Labour Churches to which he paid high tribute:

> The Labour Churches are nearer to the common multitude than any other socialist organisation, and are as good machines for reaching outsiders, and putting them on the right road, as any organisation I have ever known.
>
> We must constantly remember that our task is not to please ourselves, but to make more Socialists. You can't catch fish with a naked hook, and if the fish will bite better at doxologies than at economics, then every good fisherman will fill his bait-can with doxologies.[4]

---

1. Inglis, Thesis, p. 485
2. For a contemporary expression and discussion see article by Enid Stacy "The Labour Movement and the Home", Prophet, March 1893, p. 20.
3. Early Labour Church meetings shared with Socialist Campaigns generally the absence of women, but before long veteran political workers were commenting favourably on the number of women attending Labour Church services.
4. Herbert N. Casson in Prophet, December 1897, p. 140. Inglis's conclusion, that the Labour Churches were in a sad state of decline, were becoming dowdy and unfriendly, is based largely upon

The propaganda service of the Labour Churches, particularly during the eighteen nineties, must not be minimized just because it lost importance during the next decade.[1] Frequently towards the end of the 19th century Labour Church Secretaries were complaining that other groups, particularly the S. D. F., and sometimes the I. L. P.[2] were running opposition meetings of a political and secular nature. These were the forerunners of the changing attitudes that made the propaganda service of the Labour Churches redundant by the end of the first decade of the new century.

We must remember too, that while Labour Churches were happy to provide a propaganda platform, and were willing to organize Clarion Cycle Clubs for the purpose of distributing propaganda literature, and gave strong support to the Clarion Vans and various week-long Socialist Missions, they felt their work was incomplete if a deeper spiritual awareness were not created. Again and again spokesmen of the church movement and secretaries reporting the activities of the congregations expressed their awareness of their function as a 'church' and the necessity of awakening a spiritual awareness that

---

1. the letter from which these extracts are taken. Inglishreads too much into Casson's brief recommendations for improvement (i.e. brighter halls and a welcoming committee at the door) and gives too little attention to the straight foreward appraisal here quoted.
1. What little news reporting there was of the Labour Churches in the Clarion during the first decade of the 20th Century seems to take them for granted. Labour Churches account for about one-half of the Sunday lectures advertised in the Clarion and one-quarter of all lectures (Sunday and weekday) so advertised.
2. H. C. Rowe, reporting on a visit to Manchester in the Prophet, March 1896, p. 37: "The attendance was rather small for the pioneer church. It is true that the score or so of meetings held by the Independent Labour branches all over the city every Sunday take away the bulk of those who used to attend the meetings three years ago. . . ."

Socialism might not descend into a mere 'bread and butter struggle'. They echoed the idea expressed by Trevor:

> Most people to whom I talk of these things tell me that we must wait for Socialism! How one-eyed people are! If people who love dungeons, whether of Secularism or of Dogma get their Socialism, you may be quite sure they will make a dungeon of it.[1]

The propaganda service was not merely the providing of a 'Sabbath Platform' for economic socialists; it was the propagation of a moral and religious enthusiasm that might easily have perpetuated the "Religion of Socialism".

Recruiting Service:

Mrs. Senior gave the present writer a very fine account of the working of the Bradford Labour Church, and the way in which the social needs of the congregation enlisted the aid of the women.[2] Not only was it the teas, the socials, and the sales of work, but also the Cinderella clubs, the Sunday Schools and the s tudy groups that enlisted the active participation of women who had formerly been conspicuous by their absence. In Barrow-in-Furness, and perhaps in other places as well, Women's I. L. P. Groups were formed under church auspices, for both study and practical work.

In Labour Churches many workers gained their start and their early experience, for the congregation established large committees to conduct their business, required readers and chairmen for their services, gave training and opportunities in public speaking,[3] encouraged the writing of papers based upon careful reading as basis of discussion in study groups, and enabled many who would not dare

---

1. Prophet, April 1896, p. 56
2. Appendix p. 710
3. Eg. Norman Tiptaft, The Individualist, p. 48: "I got some of my early training in speech making at the Labour Church".

address a public meeting to find their feet and their voices as they argued socialism with a small circle of spectators at the open air meetings.

Often a man or woman prominent in the Labour Church was put foreward as a candidate for local office as Councillor, Guardian, or School Board member.[1] Official congregational endorsation of the candidate was received and the church became part of the electioneering organization, in many instances the headquarters of it. Church members were enlisted for the multitude of activities associated with elections, and were often thus enlisted for active party membership.

As we consider the recruiting service of the Labour Churches we must again emphasize the characteristic attitude which is so easily misunderstood by any of us whose tradition is that of the historic churches. For the Labour Church member there was little or no distinction between Religious and Political activity. "God is in the Labour Movement". "The Labour Movement is a Religious Movement". Therefore electioneering and political campaigning were practical expressions of religious enthusiasm. It was a more 'religious' service than acting on the Dioscesan Council or attend-

---

1. We must not assume that because the candidate is put foreward by the I. L. P. or the S. D. F. that the Labour Church had no part in it. It was the accepted policy that the Labour Church members would work through the party of their own choice. A candidate who was prominent in the Labour Church had a better chance of the united support of all socialist bodies. The only Labour Church minutes available (Birmingham and Bradford) make it quite clear that in the early days particularly, the congregations had a big influence in the choice of and support for Socialist candidates. For instance, Birmingham Labour Church underwrote 25% of the expenses of the Joint Socialist Committee which they had initiated.

ing the Wesleyan Class Meeting.[1] A person could give his whole self to Socialism, for this was the way to achieve both the salvation of his society and of himself.

The Humanizing Service:

> And in their rough and ready way the Labour Churches bear witness to the fact that man is not an economic animal only, that he is something more than a "producer" and a "consumer". They are not "Clubs for Ethical and Spiritual Culture" I was glad to find; but they recognize more than the scientific S. D. F., or the practical I. L. P., or the cynical Fabian Society, that there is in every human being an abiding reverence for the Truths which are yet unknown, and for the Intelligence which is the impulse of all social evolution.[2]

So wrote Herbert Casson. The tendency of the S. D. F. was towards a materialist-Marxist Scientific Socialism; the tendency of the I. L. P. was to political action to attain amelioration of environmental factors and therefore to a "bread and butter" Socialism; the tendency of the Fabian Society was towards an intellectual analysis that discounted something of the warm emotional side of human life,

---

1. Prophet, November 1893, p. 111 -- Trevor, after a visit to Barrow-in-Furness, where Pete Curran was adopted as Labour Candidate, wrote in an Editorial: "Curran, my boy, stick to these Barrow men! I don't see how they are going to put you into Parliament. But they may do it. They are as brave a set as ever I met. Stand by them, Pete, and fight it out there. No church in the land will be doing a better piece of God's work than you will be doing, if you do it well. If Barrow does not send you to Parliament, it is sending out a scattered host of trained Socialists -- trained in the school of hunger and pain -- and you are helping their training."
2. Prophet, December 1897, p. 140. Cf. Trevor, Prophet, February 1895, p. 26: "The intellectual, moral, and religious development of the men, women, and children in the movement; the awakening of all individuals therein to the deeper facts of life, of more serious and permanent import than even our social and secular relations; the realisation of human life as governed by divine laws, without obedience to which there can be no life worth living; the inspiration towards God, which only the deepest acquaintance with life can bring -- all this is what the Labour Church should continually be striving to give to the Labour Party, without which neither Church nor Party can ever achieve the great purpose for which they have been organised."

and so to a 'Cynical' Socialism, though the term 'sophisticated' Socialism may be more descriptive.[1] The Labour Churches, being an impulse of the people rather than a movement directed by a person or a committee, tended to soften these tendencies and to shape them to the desires and needs of the ordinary membership of the Socialist movement. It is quite true that Trevor's high ideal of spiritualizing the Labour Movement was not realized as he himself admitted[2] but the lesser contribution was no less important because of the failure of the greater. British Socialism has an ethical and humanitarian aspect because of many factors, not least among which is the influence of the Labour Church Movement.[3]

The Fellowship Service:

We have dealt at length with the Labour Church Congregation as an agency providing for the fellowship of socialists[4] and there is no need of repeating what was said there. We need only emphasize that the Labour Churches were among the earliest and the most satisfying of the many groups called into being to satisfy this need, and to underline the Labour Church idea that this was a 'religious'

---

1. In commenting on a Fabian meeting at which G. B. Shaw as speaker quelled a morally earnest but not so intellectually acute S. D. F. Socialist, Trevor wrote in the Prophet, November 1895, p. 162: "We need some larger mind, capable of combining the intellectual acumen of the Fabian Society with the moral enthusiasm of the I. L. P. and the S. D. F. It was pitiful at Essex Hall to see moral enthusiasm pitting itself hopelessly against a clear and bright intellect, somewhat defiantly, and yet very tolerantly, conscious of the impregnable strength of its own position.
   And no one at Essex Hall seemed quite to see through the situation. . . . I have been wondering whether, in the Labour Church, we cannot reconcile and unite these two elements."
2. Cf. comment of Stanley Trevor, Vide Supra p. 52.
3. Cf. comment of Arthur Woolerton, Vide Supra p. 92.
4. Vide Supra pp. 110-121.

service, and not just a way of attracting people so that they would make personal contact with the religious activities of the congregation. The New Life which was to characterize the new society was to be a happy life of freedom where people would know how to enjoy themselves in song and dance and in a really satisfying fellowship one with another in the Brotherhood of all Humanity.

The Harmonizing Service:

The existence of a Socialist organization at local level which was not actively engaged in political party work and which did not propagate a particular political theory contributed much to the harmony of the Socialist cause, and paved the way for the Labour Party itself. The thought behind the inauguration of the I. L. P. was a federation which should include all groups -- but in this it failed and another political party was formed. When the idea of federation was again put foreward in the formation of the L. R. C. it succeeded. There were many factors in the years between 1893 and 1900 to account for the difference of reception, and not least among them is the fact that members of the S. D. F., the I. L. P., various Trade Unions and Fabian Societies had worked amicably side by side on Labour Church Committees and had worshipped together in Labour Church services.[1]

---

1. The Souvenir Program of the Official Opening of Adelphi Hall, Stockport, 1952 acknowledges this service; Adelphi Hall replaced the Central Hall which had been bought by the Labour Church and which became the Central Headquarters for Socialist and Trade Union activities in Stockport: "The Labour Church in Stockport . . . was an independent body, being attached to the Trades and Labour Council only by affiliation. Its membership comprised of men and women whose approach to Socialism came in different ways. There were Independent Labour Party members, Social Democrat Party members, Labour Party members and the unattached Socialists. They all came together in a spirit of Unity and Comradeship. This may have been because outside the Movement a declared Socialist was beset with hostility and abuse."

This is the role of the Labour Churches which was most widely acclaimed by Labour Leaders and Labour Church Secretaries during the active life of the congregations. It was dramatically put in an Executive Report to the Annual Meeting of the Birmingham congregation:

> The Labour Church is the place where the S. D. F. lion can lie down with the I. L. P. lamb and receive the benediction of the Fabian.

Dan Irving of the S. D. F. put it this way:

> Another phase of the Labour Church work is that it provides a free platform whereon all sections of the socialist party may meet on neutral ground, to discuss and consider the truths of Socialism from every standpoint, and so by bringing together men and women of diverse moods, tend to increase the points of agreement and promote the ultimate union of all Socialist forces. In this work the Labour Church has no rivals.[1]

<u>The Gadfly Service</u>:

Fred Brocklehurst, in opening the Bolton Labour Church Sale of Work in 1900 said:

> The Labour Church Movement has acted not only upon their own churches, but upon the churches on the outside. The Union has done good in both directions. It has prevented the Labour Movement from becoming small, utilitarian and economic, and has kept it in touch with the well-spring of the vital forces of the people as well as teaching some of the churches to practically carry out the teachings of Jesus Christ's mind, the application of religion to politics and to bring it down into the workaday affairs of human life.[2]

The influence of the Labour Churches on the Denominations was

---

1. <u>Prophet</u>, November 1897, p. 129
2. Reginald A. Beckett writing a few years earlier in the <u>Prophet</u>, October 1896, p. 161, expressed a similar idea: "One of the most convincing proofs of the necessity and reality of our efforts to develop the Religion of Labour is to be found in the fact that all existing forms of Christianity are compelled, as it were, in self-defence - to exhibit a social side to their religion. In every denomination the younger and more earnest members are grouping themselves, formally or otherwise, into a progressive party which emphasizes the Socialist element in their particular faith."

not so much in what the Labour Churches said or did, as in their very existence. They came as a challenge. If there were sufficient religious enthusiasm in the Labour Movement that could not find expression within the churches, then it was increasingly important that the churches rethink their position and revamp their programs that they might more truly minister to the needs of the age. Out of the challenge came many and diverse programs.

It is not suggested here that the awakening of the Christian Churches to their social responsibilities and the development of the Social Gospel were the direct counterpart of the Labour Churches. Such would be a claim out of all proportion to the evidence. Our suggestion is that the creation of, and the spontaneous response to, the Labour Churches were irritating factors which contributed to a quicker tempo of social change particularly on the part of the Chapels whose members were attracted to the new Socialism. The Adult School Movement, and Pleasant Sunday Afternoon programs were given increasingly important roles as counter attractions to Labour Churches and Political Rallies[1] and from them came reinforcements for the socializing movement in the conscience of the Christian Church.

---

1. Stead, The Labour Movement in Religion, p. 6: "Then there is a larger and much more decidedly religious movement, the Adult Schools. These have been taken up by the workers of the Midlands and elsewhere in their thousands. Wonderful tales are told of the new life this movement is making.
   Then there is the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon movement. It counts some hundred thousand enrolled members, and it is steadily advancing. This is a form of religious service which seems to fit the wants of the British working men. The Adult School Movement, the Labour Church, and the P. S. A. movement are signs of the beginning of the great Labour Movement in religion."

During the early years of the twentieth century there were increasing evidences that the voices of Paul Stacy, Conrad Noel, P. E. T. Widdrington, Percy Dearmer, Canon Scott Holland, etc., were no longer lone voices in a wilderness of contentment with the Status quo. They were joined by a large section of the Church. Considerable support was forthcoming for the Sweated industries exhibition of 1907 and the Church Congress on Socialism in 1909. One hundred and thirteen Christian ministers were willing to sign a Socialist Manifesto:[1] On the side of the non-conformist branches of the Church there was the 1905 invitation from the National Council of Free Churches to Select Labour leaders to a "strictly pri-

---

1. 83 of the 113, including the Rev. W. B. Graham, belonged to the Church of England. The following is the Manifesto:
"We, the undersigned ministers of Christian Churches of various denominations desire to make this declaration in view of the widely circulated suggestion, which has been made in the press and elsewhere, that the socialism we believe in differs fundamentally from the socialism advocated by the recognized Socialist organization.
We declare that the Socialism we believe in (sometimes called "Christian Socialism"), involves the public ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and is therefore essentially the same socialism as that which is held by Socialists throughout the world.
Our Socialism is not less earnest nor less complete because it is inspired by our Christianity. The Central teaching of Socialism is a matter of economics, and may, therefore, be advocated by all men, whether they be Christians or unbelievers; yet we feel, as ministers of the Christian faith, that this economic doctrine is in perfect harmony with our faiths, and we believe that its advocacy is sanctioned and indeed required of us by the implication of our religion.
(Signatures)

The National Council of the I. L. P., which represents the bulk of English Socialists, has unanimously repudiated the foul and unfair attack as to atheism and free lust so frequently levelled against Socialism by ignorant opponents."
Cf. also the Liverpool Clarion Club's Confession of Socialism which was signed by 160 British clergy and the similar confession signed by 161 American clergy in 1909.

vate" conference (where there could be frank discussion without fear of being reported) to determine how far the two bodies "having identical objects can unite to secure the object of their social ideals".[1]

From a very early date John Trevor began to wonder if the work of the Labour Churches might be done from within the Churches. His considered opinion was that they were too bound by tradition,[2] that the changes in attitudes and ideas would be too revolutionary to be deemed possible. Yet at the back of his mind the possibility lingered. In an editorial in 1895 he wrote:

> There are thousands of young men and women in the churches who find no gospel in the weekly message of their minister, who are becoming converted to Socialism in large numbers, and who, despairing of religion, or never really awakened to it, are drifting into secular socialism, and accepting that as the one gospel for weary man. . . .
>
> Will these young people come into the Labour Churches, to develop the religious life slowly awakening there; or will they remain where they are, and gradually revolutionise their own churches, and live their own lives with God, while working for the salvation of their fellow men? . . .
>
> I must confess that I cannot share the pleasant conviction that it is possible to combine in one organisation all those who accept the same fundamental idea. Human nature has to be counted with, after all.[3]

---

1. Clarion, November 17, 1905: The Clarion politely laughed at the idea of "identical objects", but we must notice that it was distinct progress that such a conference could be convened.
2. "Some will say I should be satisfied so long as the message is preached, by whatever Church it may be. But I am not, for in the Historic Churches it is associated with the traditional religion of the day, and the supremacy of Tradition will strangle the real life of the message quite as inevitably as the supremacy of Politics." -- Prophet, October 1894, p. 137.
   ". . . I do not think the proposal of church "Permeation" worth entertaining. Even with the churches which are "Liberal" in their theology, there is still the same backward look which makes my adequate "Forward Movement" impossible." -- Prophet, September, 1892, p. 68.
3. Prophet, February 1895, pp 33f.

Many of these young men and women remained with the historic churches and under the leadership of those who were really awakened to religious life, men like William Temple, they accomplished, at least the beginning of the 'revolution' which seemed impossible in 1892.[1] It seems reasonable to suppose that the existence of Labour Churches and similar movements acted as the gadfly which stimulated more rapid motion.

The Disappearing Service:

A. J. Waldegrave, one time secretary of the Labour Church Union said to the present writer:

> I'm glad, on the whole that the Labour Church did not flourish and become another established sect.

Perhaps one of the reasons it didn't was the attitude of its founder and many of its supporters toward any efforts at perpetuating an organization or institution for its own sake.

> It is time a church was organised with courage enough to run full speed past a danger signal, and take the consequences. It is time there was a religious institution with some sense of responsibility to something outside itself and its own development; and with a real willingness to sacrifice itself, and even to cease to be, if the welfare of that something demands it. The only fear I have for the Labour Church is lest it should not be sufficiently inspired with this devoted spirit; lest its officers should love their office too well, and its members should make their organisation an end rather than a means.[2]

Like many other groups the Labour Church failed to live up to the ideals and expectations of its founder, but unlike them it did not perpetuate its own existence after it had done its job; in this it rendered what may be its most merciful service. It did not acquire that sectarian character which perpetuates many denominations long after the historic causes which brought them into being have

---

1. Cf. comments of W. T. Taylor, Appendix p. 726.
2. Trevor - Prophet, April 1893, p. 28.

ceased to be operative. This was a blessing to both, the Labour Party and the orthodox Churches. Having registered their protest, and having given expression to an heretical faith till the historic denominations began to make good their lack of emphasis on a social gospel[1], the Labour Churches disintegrated; their members continued their work within the framework of Church, Chapel or Ethical Society and in the Political Parties of their several choices. Where the congregations survived they were no longer churches but merely debating clubs or cultural societies whose educational aims were consistent with and supplementary to the development of the Labour Movement.

* * * * *

<u>The Significance of the Labour Churches Today</u>:

Our main purpose in the present work has been to present as accurate and as lively a picture as possible of the Labour Church Movement, but the study would not be complete without a few notes of post-script, for while the Labour Churches are no more, many of the ideas they attempted to express are still with us. When one is reminded of the ethical and religious aspects of British labour history as contrasted with other socialist movements one is reminded of the Labour Churches and of the I. L. P. (and Labour Party) Sunday meetings which were in reality "Sunday Meetings on Labour

---

1. Inglis's contention that the aroused conscience of the Churches was not sufficient to account for the decline of Labour Churches is inaccurate. Rev. W. Major Scott, M.A., in the <u>Lees-Smith Encyclopaedia</u>, article on Non-Conformist Churches, p. 300, indicates a different view -- "The Non-Conformist Churches have slowly but steadily appreciated the social implication of the Christian faith, and during the last generation they have realised with increasing clearness that the Kingdom of God involves a social order."

Church lines". Such meetings are still carried on. Mr. Reginald Sorenson, M. P. told the present writer of preaching the sermon at one such gathering in 1953, and of Harvest Festivals and Labour Days where workers' make an annual parade to the local church.[1]

While one might hesitate to make a claim that the British Labour Party of today was a particularly 'selfless' movement, I believe we must recognize a number of ethical strands which have carried throughout the history of the party, keeping it from the grosser forms of self-seeking it might have otherwise entertained. Certainly there still remains a strong ethical motive in the desire for socialization. The Labour Party's Manifesto, Challenge to Britain contains these words:

> Behind all its proposals . . . lies the abiding faith of our organised movement in the moral and spiritual ideals which inspired its pioneers and founders.

There were three great motivating ideas behind the upsurge of the Labour Church which it may be well for us to consider. When the Churches became content with the status quo, and did all in their power to maintain it, they gave rise to a feeling that God was no longer active in history.[2] As a challenge to this static commentary on contemporary religion, there came a resurgence of the idea of God at work within human history. THough Trevor's idea of "The Growing Point of Evolution" may seem to us to be distinctly

---

1. Cf. Appendix p.729.
2. Trevor expresses this idea in the Prophet, February 1892, p. 12 -- ". . . it is not in the least essential to bother our heads about what happened 1800 years ago, . . . we have all the essentials of religious life and work in entering heartily into the life of our own times, and that to make the first century the standard of the nineteenth is to suppose that God works backwards," or gets tired, or goes to sleep, or some other nonsense. . . .

dated, the idea behind it may not be irrelevant to modern life. The tensions of cold war and the detonation of hydrogen bombs do foster a sense of frustration, and a sense of the aimlessness of historic development. 'God may have been active in Old Testament times, but he is not concerned with the tensions between U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.' If faith does not supply men with a sense of God's purposes working out in present day history, with some sense of God's immanence, as well as his Transcendence expressing itself in apocalyptic terms, then the vacancy will be filled with a lesser concept. And the unhistoric and creedless faith of the modern day may not be so benign as was Trevor's.

The relation of the secular to the sacred in the field of Labour is a question of relevance to the modern world. What is the true application of religion to the problems faced in a modern industrial society? Many are the avenues being explored by groups such as the Iona Community, the Worker Priests and the Religion-Labour Foundation. The answers must be tried and proven if the world is to benefit. The Labour Church was one experiment -- an attempt at solution which made its contribution but which in its over-all plan, was a failure. Perhaps it was bound to fail because of the rejection of its source of dynamic power. It tried to enjoy the fruits of the Christian ethic without the roots of the Christian Faith.

The third idea giving rise to the Labour Churches that is of importance in the modern world is "Freedom". The Labour Churches were a movement for Emancipation from creeds whose form of expression was no longer relevant, and from the dictates of conventional mores whose purpose was to perpetuate a structure of society out of

accord with men's ideals. Whenever such a situation has existed in history there has been generated much moral enthusiasm, and a willingness to serve and to sacrifice. Such emotional power is usually directed against restraint; if its power is not spent when it has achieved Emancipation from enslavement, there remains a formless and directionless energy that may be used for purposes good or evil.[1] Much of the world today is sounding the cry of "Emancipation" and "Liberty", and slowly the chains of political colonialism are being broken. Resentment is now being directed towards the subtler and yet stronger chains of economic imperialism. One wonders what might happen in our world if the tremendous moral and spiritual forces directed toward Emancipation were to achieve their purpose. Would there be leadership to direct these same forces to constructive ends? Perhaps this survey of one small sector of the religious expression of Socialism may serve as a microcosm to help understand some of the gigantic forces we must learn to control or else resign ourselves to atomic disaster.

---

1. The German Youth movement which grew up after the first world war has certain affinities with the development of the Labour Church idea in Great Britain during the nineties. Both had their rather anarchic religious appreciation of the Infinite; both were formless seekings after expression. The German Youth movement received direction in the person of Adolph Hitler, for whom it developed its services of adoration and 'communion'. One is tempted to hazard one of the great 'Ifs of History'. If John Burns, or John Trevor, or Keir Hardie had been an Adolph Hitler, what might have happened with the Socialist awakening as its religious expression was directed to the attainment of personal ambition and power?

Let us be true!
Our cause is holy and our purpose pure
Let us be sure
The means we choose hide not our aim from view.

Let us be true!
Our hope cannot consent to doubtful deeds:
Our strong will needs
None but clean hands our righteous work to do.

Let us be true!
Thought, word, and deed, even as our cause is pure;
And so endure
Firm to the end, whatever fate ensue!

-- W. J. Linton
L.C. Hymn Book, 2nd ed., No. 131.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SECTION I -- GENERAL

Historical Studies

Barker, Ernest -- The Character of England
Beer, Max -- A History of Socialism (1940)
Binyon, G. C. -- The Christian Socialist Movement in England (1931)
Birnie, Arthur -- Economic History of the British Isles
Cole, G. D. H. -- Socialist Thought, Vol. III, Pt. I.
Short History of British Working Class Movements
The Development of Socialism during the past 50 years (1951))
Cole, G. D. H. & Postgate, Raymond -- The Common People 1746-1938
Elliott-Binns, L. E. -- English Thought 1860-1900, The Theological Aspect (1956)
Elton, Godfrey -- England Arise
Ensor, R. C. K. -- England
Gregg, Pauline -- A Social and Economic History of England 1760-1955
Holt, Raymond V. -- Unitarian Contributions to Social Progress in England
Johnston, Thomas -- A History of the Working Classes in Scotland
Lower, Arthur -- From Colony to Nation
Masters, D. C. -- The Winnipeg General Strike (1950)
May, Henry F. -- Protestant Churches and Industrial America (1949)
Pelling, Henry M. -- Origins of the Labour Party 1880-1900 (1954)
Rauschenbusch, Walter -- Christianity and the Social Crisis (1908)
Reckitt, M. B. -- Maurice to Temple, a Century of the Social Movement in the Church of England (1947)
Skelton, O. D. -- Socialism, A Critical Analysis (1911)
Tawney, R. H. -- The British Labour Movement
Religion and the Rise of Capitalism
Trevelyan, G. M. -- English Social History, Reprint Society (1948)
Webb, Sydney and Beatrice -- The History of Trade Unionism
Young, George Malcolm -- Victorian England, Portrait of an Age.

Novels, etc.

Brittain, Vera -- Testament of Youth, An Autobiographical Study of the Years 1900-1925 (1934)
Besant, Sir Walter -- All Sorts and Conditions of Men (1882)
Massingham, Harold John and Hugh (Editors) -- Great Victorians (1932)
Rae, John M. A. -- Contemporary Socialism (1891)

Encyclopaediae, etc.

The Anti-Socialist Union Speakers Handbook
Bliss, Wm. D. P. (Editor), Encyclopaedia of Social Reform
Edwards, Jos. -- Labour Annual, 1895 to 1900 inclusive
Reformers Year Book 1901 to 1909 inclusive
I. L. P. Year Books
Lees-Smith, H. B. (Editor) -- Encyclopaedia of the Labour Movement
The Socialist Annual 1906 to 1925

Theses

Cominos, P. -- Nuffield College, "Socialism in England till the formation of the Labour Party."
Crowley, D. W. -- L. S. E., "The Origin of the Revolt of the British Labour Movement from Liberalism 1875-1906"
Inglis, Ken. -- Nuffield College, "English Churches and the Working Classes 1880-1900"
Pelling, H. M. -- Cambridge, "The Origins and Early History of the I.L.P. 1880-1900."
Pierson, Stan. -- Harvard, "Socialism and Religion, Their Interaction in Great Britain 1889-1911."
Solberg, C. T. -- Oxford , "The I. L. P. 1893-1918"

Periodicals

Bradford Labour Journal
Cardiff Labour Pioneer
The Clarion
Commonweal
Congregational Quarterly Vol. XXXV, No. 2 (April 1957), article by Wilf. J. Rowlan "Some Free Church Pioneers of Social Reform"
The Labour Leader
Manchester City News
Seed-time (Organ of the Fellowship of New Life)
Socialist Review
Transactions (Congregational Historical Society) Vol. XVIII, No. 1 (August 1956), article by Stephen H. Mayor, B.D.
Reynolds Newspaper
Scottish Church History Society, Vol. XI, Pt. III, article by Wm. Marwick "Social Heretics in the Scottish Churches"
The Workmans Times

Studies in Socialism, Labour, and Religion

Bax, E. B. -- The Religion of Socialism (1886)
The Ethics of Socialism (1889)
Booth, Charles -- Life and Labour of the People of London, a Complete Statistical Survey by Trade and Occupation
Brooks, J. G. -- The Social Unrest, Studies in the Labour and Socialist Movements (1903)
Champion, H. H. -- The Great Dock Strike
Clayton, J. -- The Rise and Decline of Socialism in Great Britain, 1884-1924 (1926)
Davis, Jerome (Editor) -- Labor Speaks for Itself on Religion (1929)
Guyot, E. -- Le Socialisme et L'envol de l'Angleterre Contemporaine 1880-1911 (1913)
Hopkins, Charles Howard -- The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism 1865-1915 (1940)
Metin, Albert -- Le Socialisme en Angleterre (1897)
Oxnam, G. B. -- Labour and Tomorrow's World
Rousiers, Paul de -- Le Trade Unionisme en Angleterre (1897)
The Labour Question in Britain (1896)
Spinks, George Stephens -- Religion in Britain Since 1900 (1952)
Stead, Francis Herbert -- The Story of Social Christianity (1924)

Stelzle, Chas. -- The Church and Labour (1910)
Ward, W. F. -- Labour Movement from the Standpoint of Religious Values (1928)
Ward, J. -- Socialism and the Religion of Humanity
Wearmouth, Dr. Robt. F. -- Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century (1945)
Methodism and the Struggle of the Working Classes 1850-1900 (1954)
Methodism and the Working Class Movements 1800-1850 (1937)
The Social and Political Influence of Methodism in the Twentieth Century (1957)
Some Working Class Movements of the Nineteenth Century (1948)
Webster, Nesta Helen -- The Socialist Network (1926)
Williams, Francis -- Fifty Years' March - The Rise of the Labour Party
The Winnipeg General Strike -- (Defence Committee - Labor Organisations in Winnipeg)
Wood, Herbert George -- Belief and Unbelief since 1850 (1955)

SECTION II -- LABOUR CHURCH PUBLICATIONS
(Items published by, initiated by, or pertaining to the Labour Churches)

Manuscripts

Birmingham Labour Church Minutes (Vols. 1, 4, and 7ff are missing) Birmingham Public Library
Bradford Labour Church Minutes and I. L. P. Minutes; Bradford Independent Labour Party
Upper Brook Street Unitarian Chapel, Minutes of Executive Committee, Courtesy of Principal Holt, Unitarian College, Manchester

Periodicals

Bradford Labour Echo -- published by Bradford Labour Church
Forward -- successor to the Labour Church Record, published only in August or September 1902. (I have not been able to locate a copy.)
The Labour Church Record -- Quarterly January 1899 to 1901 (The Record was replaced by an occasional column in the Clarion during 1902.)
The Labour Prophet -- Monthly January 1892 to September 1898.
Nottingham Labour Echo -- published by Nottingham Labour Church
The Prophet -- Issued in March 1894 only. (The Labour Prophet for that month was not issued, but was resumed the following months with the March-April issue.)
Stockport Labour Church Lecture Syllabus --
Various local editions of the Labour Prophet -- (A cover with local advertising and news was put over the regular Labour Prophet)

Labour Church Tracts -- by John Trevor

No. 1 God in the Labour Movement, (Feb. 1892)
No. 2 An Independent Labour Party, (May 1892)
New Series No. 1 Theology and the Slums, (Feb. 1894)
New Series No. 2 Man's Cry for God, (March 1894)

Labour Prophet Tracts -- by John Trevor

No. 1 Theology and the Slums, (Feb. 1895) (reprint)
No. 2 From Ethics to Religion, (March 1895)
No. 3 Our First Principle, (May 1895)
No. 4 The Labour Church in England, (August 1896) (published in English, French, and German)

Labour Prophet Tracts, Second Series -- by Philip Henry Wicksteed

No. 1 What Does the Labour Church Stand For? (Oct. 1895)

Handbills and Leaflets (Various dates 1891-1896)

No. 1 Labour Church Principles
No. 2 The Labour Church has Come (appendix p. 505)
No. 3 The Labour Movement a Religion
No. 4 Work and Wealth Shared
No. 5 The Greatest Cause on Earth
For God and Liberty
Do you Desire the Emancipation of Labour?
The Labour Church Extension Fund
The Labour Prophet Fund, (1896)
The Labour Church Brotherhood, (1896)
Letter, Nov. 12, 1891, and Financial Statement (appendix pp. 507ff.)
Membership Forms
Labour Prophet Calendar, (1896)
Labour Songs
Tunes to Labour Songs
Cinderella Songs
Tunes to Cinderella Songs
Labour Hymns
Tunes to Labour Hymns
Cinderella - a reprint of the Cinderella Supplement

Articles about the Labour Church and the Labour Church Idea

The Christian World, New York, (Aug. 1892)
Forum, New York, (18:597) "The Religion of the Labour Movement" by John Trevor.
Great Thoughts, (January 1897), article by Ernest Williams.
De Hervorming (Holland), An article about the Labour Church and its founder appeared sometime in the autumn of 1896.
The Inquirer, July 1891, and October 1892, articles by Trevor and P. H. Wicksteed.
The Nation, (54:27) "The Labour Church" by R. Ogden.
The New Era, Feb. 15, 1892, article by W. H. Dawson.
North American Review (178:915 1904) "Socialism as a Rival of Organised Christianity" by T. C. Hall.
The Spectator, (72:530, 533, 582) Letter by Evelyn March-Phillips (April 21, 1894) and comment arising from it.
The Thinker, (3:8) article by Blaikie, (3:105) reply by Keir Hardie, (3:295) rejoinder by J. M. Long.
British Weekly, Jan. 18, 1894.

Labour Church Pamphlets and Labour Church Addresses

Beckett, R. A. -- The Labour Church and its Future
Casson, H. N. (of the American Labour Church) --
What We Believe, Labour Church Pamphlet No. 3
Five Principles of the Liberal Faith
The Socialism of Nature, (1895)
Sunday Blue Law and the Labour Movement
Bill Brooks and the Parson
God Wills It
Hard Facts for Americans
Origin of Christianity in Trade Unions
Labor Song Book
Who is the Anarchist -- Bryan or Hanna?
Organized Self Help -- The History of the American Labour Movement
Harker, B. J. -- Christianity and the New Social Demands, (1892)
Henderson, Fred. -- The Case for Socialism, Clarion Pamphlet (1908)
The Case for Socialism, (full series of sermons) (1911)
Politics in the Pulpit, (appendix pp. 552ff.)
Herford, Hugh V. -- Democratic Religion (c. 1902.) (Quoted by C. H. Herford in Philip Wicksteed, but I can find no trace of such a book or pamphlet. It was the title of a sermon H. V. Herford gave to several labour congregations about this time, so it is very likely it was privately published.)
Hobson, Samuel George -- Possibilities of the Labour Church (1893)
Lowe, David (under nom-de-plume "Tricotrin") -- Mutuality, an expression of the Labour Church (I have not been able to trace this pamphlet which Lowe says he published - see Souvenirs of Scottish Labour.)
Mackail, John William -- The Parting of the Ways, a lecture delivered at the William Morris Labour Church at Leek, (1902.)
Tamlyn, John -- Practical Socialism
A new Sermon from an Old Text } Labour Church Sermons
Tiptaft, Norman -- A Parody on Christian Church and Religion (a Labour Church lecture in 1912)
God's Englishman
Webster, Rev. Alex -- The Political Position of Labour (a Labour Church sermon at Oldham, 1893)
Wilson, Ven. James Maurice, M.A. -- The Ethical Basis of the Labour Movement (a lecture to the Labour Church and I. L. P. at Bolton 1895)
Wm. Morris Labour Church, -- The Book of the Opening of the William Morris Labour Church in Leek, (1897)
Woodsworth, J. S. -- The First Story of the Labor Church (Canadian Labor Church publication) (Appendix, pp. 563ff.)

Books

Birmingham Labour Church Hymn Book
Labour Church Hymn Book, 1st edition Sept. 1892, supplement added 1896, 2nd edition c. 1904, revision of 2nd edition 1906.
Tune Book for 1st Edition Hymn Book
Tune Book for 2nd Edition Hymn Book
Trevor, My Quest for God, 1st edition 1897, 2nd edition 1908

Materials Supplementary to the Labour Church

Abbott, Lyman -- The Theology of an Evolutionist, (1897)
Adderley, James -- The Parson in Socialism, (1910)
Is Socialism Atheism? (1910)
Atkinson, H. A. -- The Church and Industrial Warfare
Balmforth, Ramsden -- The New Reformation and its Relation to Morals and Social Problems, (1893), (acclaimed by Trevor to be the Intellectual side of the Labour Church idea.)
Barnett, George -- The Secularisation of the Pulpit
The Secularisation of the Church
(These were the presidential addresses to the Congregational Union of England and Wales, recorded in the Congregational Year Book for 1895 and later published separately.)
Bellamy -- Edward Bellamy's Parable of the Water Tank -(I.L.P. Pamphlet)
Benson, George -- Socialism and the Teaching of Jesus, (1925)
Besant, Annie -- Why I am a Socialist
Blatchford, Robert -- Merrie England, (1894)
The New Religion, (c. 1897)
Socialism - A Reply to the Encyclical of the Pope (of 15 May, 1891, entitled "De Conditione Opificum"), (1893)
Three Open Letters to the Bishop of Manchester on Socialism.
Brocklehurst, Fred -- I was In Prison
A Socialist's Programme (A Political Address to the Electors in 1889)
Campbell, Robert J. -- The New Theology and the Socialist Movement
Primitive Christianity and Modern Socialism
The New Theology (1907)
Socialism (I.L.P. Pub. 1907)(An address to the Bolton I.L.P., apparently to a meeting on Labour Church lines)

Carpenter, Edward -- Forecasts of the Coming Century
Clarke, C. Allen (one time editor of Labour Church Record)-- What do we Live For?
Clifford, Dr. -- Socialism and the Teaching of Christ (Fabian Tract)
Ellis, Mrs. Havelock -- Democracy in the Kitchen (a lecture)
Gass, M. -- The Socialism of Jesus (1893)
Glasse, John -- The Relation of the Church to Socialism (1900)
Glasier, Katharine and Bruce -- The Religion of Socialism: Two Aspects
Graham, Rev. W. W. -- The Lord's Prayer, the Aim and Life Work for all True Christians (1909)
Grayson, Victor -- The Destiny of the Mob
Hardie, James Keir -- The I. L. P. - All About It.
Can a Man be a Christian on £1 per Week?
Writings and Speeches, 1888-1915 Editor, Emrys Hughes (1915)
Hartley, E. R. -- Why are those who Work Poor? (1912)
Headley, F. W. -- Darwinism and Modern Socialism (1909)
Hird, James Dennis -- Jesus the Socialism (1908)
In Search of a Religion (1897)
Jesus the Socialist: being a lecture (1896)
I. L. P. -- The Aim and the Program of the I.L.P.
Lamennais -- The People's Prophecy
Lansbury, George -- Jesus and Labour (1924)

Text cut off in original

Lees Henry -- A Christian's Duty toward Socialism
Liebknecht, Wilhelm -- Socialism: What it seeks to accomplish
Lowe, David -- Souvenirs of Scottish Labour (1919)
McArthur, Archie (of the S.S.S.) -- Relgion and Socialism - a plea for both (1925)
MacDonald, J. Ramsay, M.P. -- The Social Unrest, Its cause and Solution
Socialism and Society
Malleson, Miles -- The I.L.P. and Its Dramatic Societies - What they are and might become
Mann, Thos. -- The Socialist Programme (1896)
The Programme of the I.L.P. and the Unemployed (1895)
A Socialist View of Religion and the Churches (1896)
Mazzini, Joseph -- Essays, Selected from the Writings, Literary, Political and Religions of Joseph Mazzine, Edited by Wm. Clarke
Ponsonby, Arthur, M.P. -- Religion in Politics (1921)
Sinclair, Wm. -- Socialism According to William Morris
Snowden, Philip -- The Economic Case for Socialism
The Ethics of Property (1913)
The Socialists Budget (1907)
Labour and the New World (1921)
Socialist Sunday Schools - A Manual
Stacy, Enid -- Is Socialism Desirable? (c. 1896)
Stead, Francis Herbert -- The Labour Movement in Religion
Tillett, Ben -- Labour Platform - New Style
An Address on Character and Environment
Fighter and Pioneer (Speeches of Ben Tillett - deals with a later period, but reveals much of Tillett's attitude to Religion) (1943)
Tolstoy, Leo -- The Triumph of Labour
Trevor, John -- The One Life (1909)
Wilson, J. Stitt -- The Message of Socialism to the Churches (1904)
How I Became a Socialist (1907)
Woolerton, Arthur -- The Labour Movement in Manchester and Salford
The Young Socialist - Organ of the Socialists Sunday Schools.

<u>Collections of Hymns, Songs, and Poetry</u>

Carpenter, Edward -- Chants of Labour
Ethical Songs
The Fellowship Hymn Book
Glasier, J. Bruce -- Socialism in Song
I. L. P. Song Book
Songs for Socialists
Stead W. T. (Editor) -- Hymns that Have Helped (1912)

<u>Biographies of People associated with the Labour Churches</u> [1]

Blatchford, Robert -- My Eighty Years (1931)
Portrait of an Englishman (Thompson, Laurence)
Broadhurst H. -- The Story of His Life (1901)
Bondfield, Margaret -- A Biography (Hamilton, Mary A.) (1924)
A Life's Work (1950)
Brockway, A. Fenner -- Inside the Left
Carpenter, Edward -- My Days and Dreams

---

1. Biographies are listed here whether or not any reference is made to the Labour Churches. Eg. In his autobiography Blatchford makes no reference to them, yet L. V. Thompson makes it clear that they were important during one phase of "Nunquam's" life.

Casson, Herbert Newton -- The Story of My Life
Postscript - the Life and Thoughts of H. N. Casson (Casson, Edward) (1953)
Clynes, J. R. -- Memoirs 1869-1924
Dearmer, Percy -- The Life of Percy Dearmer (Dearmer, Nancy) (1940)
Foster, D. B. -- Socialism and the Christ - My Two Great Discoveries
Gallacher, William, M.P. -- Revolt on the Clyde
The Rolling of the Thunder
Glasier, Glen -- The Glen Book (Glasier, Katherine) (1949)
Hardie, James Keir -- A Biography (Stewart, Wm.)
The Hungry Heart (Cockburn, John) (1956)
Headlam, Stewart -- A Biography (Bettany, Frederick G.) (1926)
Hobson, S. G. -- Pilgrim to the Left
Holland, Henry Scott -- A Bundle of Memories (1915)
Memoir and Letters (1921)
Biography (Paget, S.)
Jowett, Fred -- Socialism over Sixty Years (Brockway, A. Fenner)
Lansbury, George -- The Life of George Lansbury (Postgate, Raymond)
McMillan, Margaret -- Life of Margaret McMillan (Cresswell, D'Arcy)
Prophet and Pioneer, Her Life and Work (Mansbridge, Albert C. H.) (1932)
Makers of the Labour Movement (Cole, Margaret)
Mann, Tom -- Memoirs (1923)
Tom Mann and His Times (Torr Dona) (1956)
A Biography (Torr Dona) (1936)
Morris, William -- Life of William Morris (MacKail, J. W.)
William Morris and the Early Days of the Socialist Movement (Glasier, J. Bruce) (1921)
Noel, Conrad -- An Autobiography (1945)
Parker, J. -- A Preacher's Life (1899)
Paton, John -- Proletarian Pilgrimage (1935)
Left Turn - Autobiography (1936)
Smith, Frank, M.P. -- Pioneer and Modern Mystic (Champness, E.E) (1943)
Snowden, Philip -- An Autobiography (1934)
Stacy, Enid -- (Glasier, Katherine)
Temple, Wm. -- Archbishop of Canterbury (Iremonger)
Thompson, A. M. -- Here I Lie (1937)
Thorne, Will -- My Life Battles (1925)
Tillett, Benjamin -- Memories and Reflections (1931)
Tiptaft, Norman -- The Individualist (1954)
Walsh, Walter -- My Spiritual Pilgrimage (1925)
Webb, Beatrice -- My Apprenticeship
Webster, Rev. Alex -- My Pilgrimage from Calvinism to Unitarianism
"From Presbyterian to Unitarian" (article in Types of Religious Experience 1903)
Memories of Ministry (1913)
In Memoriam - Pioneer and Reformer (Appreciation) (1919)
Widdrington, CCanon P. E. T. -- Canon Off the Red (not yet published)
Woodsworth, J. S. -- A Man to Remember (Macinnis, Grace) (1953)
Social Pioneer (Zeigler, Olive)

There are steeple-houses on every hand,
   And pulpits that bless and ban;
And the Lord will not grudge the single church
   That is set apart for man.

For in two commandments are all the law
   And the prophets under the sun;
And the first is last, and the last is first,
   And the twain are verily one.

-- John Greenleaf Whittier
(Poem used at the head of the monthly reports of the Labour Church congregations.)